

The Understanding of Ornament in the Italian Renaissance

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The Understanding of Ornament in the Italian Renaissance

By

Clare Lapraik Guest



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To John and to the memory of Robert



Contents

Acknowledgements	IX
List of Illustrations	X
Abbreviations	XVI

Introduction	1
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PART 1

Ancient Prolegomena

1	<i>Kosmos</i>	21
2	Rhetoric and Illusion	67
3	Cosmic Decor	120

PART 2

Fragment and Design

4	Architecture and the City	173
5	Garland and Mosaic in Literary Humanism	200
6	Topics and Style	233
7	Ornament and <i>Disegno</i> , Colour and Perspective	281
8	The City Recovered, Triumph and Time	342
9	The Emblematic Continuum	405
10	<i>Spolia</i> and Ornamental Design	442
11	The <i>Grottesche</i> Part 1. Fragment to Field	494

**12 The *Grottesche* Part 2. Signs, Topography and the Dream
of Painting 536**

Conclusion 592

Bibliography of Works Cited 599

Index of Names 655

Index of Places 671

Subject Index 675

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List of Illustrations

- 1.1 Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, south exit of inner narthex. Relief of Vestibule door. 23
- 2.1 Cubiculum B, Villa Farnesina, c. 20. 95
- 2.2 Hadrianic copy of *Discobolos* of Myron, 2nd century CE (“Castelporziano *Discobolos*”). 110
- 3.1 Sol in a quadriga ascending from ocean. Rome, Arch of Constantine, east side, 315 CE. 125
- 3.2 Blue Vase from Villa of the Mosaic Columns, Pompeii, first century CE. 139
- 3.3 ‘Icarius’ relief, Graeco-Roman copy after Hellenistic original, first century BCE. 141
- 3.4 Graeco-roman relief, late first century BCE. 142
- 3.5 Fresco with Dionysian mask and garlands from Boscoreale, 50–40 BCE. 143
- 3.6 Marble calyx-krater with relief of dancing Maenads figure, first century CE. 144
- 3.7 Relief pilaster with peopled scroll from Hadrianic Baths at Aprozisias, second century CE. 147
- 3.8 Cicada in acanthus, detail of fig. 7. 148
- 3.9 Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, Detail of a candelabra grotesque, with Nereid and children playing musical instruments, 1490–1515. 150
- 3.10 Ara pacis, Rome, acanthus frieze. Engraving designed by Agostino Veneziano, c. 1530–1535. 152
- 3.11 Hagia Sophia, completed 562, upper gallery showing marble striation. 158
- 3.12 Hagia Sophia, dome. 160
- 4.1 Francesco del Cossa, Frescoes of March, April and May, Sala dei Mesi, Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara, c. 1470. 196
- 5.1 Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1482. 211
- 7.1 Botticelli, *Allegory of Abundance* or *Autumn*, c. 1475–82. 286
- 7.2 Thomas Struth, *San Zaccaria, Venice 1995*, showing Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna with Saints Peter and Jerome*, 1505. 313
- 7.3 Cesariano, *De architectura*, 1521, 11v. 319
- 7.4 Cesariano, *De architectura*, 1r. 320
- 7.5 Detail of “Ideal city” panel, ascribed to Fra Carnevale, c. 1480–84. 324
- 7.6 Pirro Ligorio, detail of *Antiquae imago urbis*, 1561. 325
- 7.7 Serlio, Tragic scene, *Secondo Libro*, 1545. Typ 525.69.781. 327

- 7.8 Palladio and Scamozzi, detail of *frons scaenae* and scenery of Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580–85. 330
- 7.9 Agostino Carracci, Buontalenti's scene for the harmony of the spheres from *Intermedio I* from Intermedi to *La Pellegrina*, 1589. 335
- 7.10 Raphael, Sibyls, Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria della Pace, Rome, 1514. 338
- 7.11 Annibale and Agostino Carracci, *Battle of the Romans and the Sabines*, Palazzo Magnani, Bologna, c. 1590. 339
- 7.12 Rosso, Galerie de François I, Fontainebleau, 1535–37. 340
- 8.1 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, sig. e1r. Fountain of Venus. 349
- 8.2 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, sig. p3v. Polyandron. 351
- 8.3 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, sigs. k5v–k6r, Triumph of Bacchus. 352
- 8.4 Francesco Rosselli, *Triumph of Love*, 1480–1500. 353
- 8.5 *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, sig. c1r, "Hieroglyphic" rebus. 355
- 8.6 School of Mantegna, engraving after Mantegna, *Triumphs of Caesar*, c. 1490. 361
- 8.7 Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, active c. 1490–c. 1525, attrib., after Mantegna, *Triumphs of Caesar*. 363
- 8.8 *Triumph of Fame*, from Petrarch, *Triumphs*. 366
- 8.9 Giovanni Antonio Dosio, View of Belvedere Court, c. 1558–61. 377
- 8.10 Perino del Vaga, Belvedere Court as a naumachia, 1542–47. Rome, Castel Sant' Angelo. 377
- 8.11 *Cleopatra* as installed in the Belvedere Court. Francisco de Holanda, *Desenhos das Antigualhas*, 8v. 382
- 8.12 Maarten van Heemskerck, Ruins of the Palatine Hill, c. 1532–37. 386
- 8.13 Serlio, *Terzo libro*, 1540, frontispiece. 387
- 8.14 Rome as a sybil, illumination to Fazio degli Uberti, *Dittamondo*, 1447, fol. 18r. Paris. 389
- 8.15 Hermanus Posthumous, *Tempus edax rerum*, 1536. 390
- 8.16 Maarten van Heemskerck, Roman sketchbook, study of Corinthian capital from c. 1532–36. 391
- 8.17 Villa Imperiale, Pesaro. 396
- 8.18 Ammanati, Vignola and Vasari. Villa Giulia, Rome, 1550–55. 397
- 8.19 Vignola and Giacomo del Duca, Horti Farnesiani, Rome, 1565–80. Engraved Carlo Antonini after Francesco Panini, Rome 1780. 399
- 8.20 Villa D'Este at Tivoli. Engraving of Du Pérac, 1573. 402
- 8.21 Villa D'Este, Rometta. From G.F. Venturini, *Le fontane del Giardino Estense in Tivoli*, 1691. 403
- 8.22 Villa Lante at Bagnaia, commenced c. 1568, completed 1590–1623. 403
- 8.23 Villa D'Este. Engraving of Venturini, 1691. 404

- 9.1 Alciati, *Emblemata*, Lyon, 1550, sig. Bir. 415
- 9.2 Botticelli, *Calumny of Apelles*, c. 1494. 432
- 9.3 Vasari, Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome, Sala dei Cento Giorni, 1546. 434
- 9.4 Taddeo Zuccari, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola, Sala di Concilio di Trento, vault, 1560–66. 435
- 9.5 Vignola and Antonio Tempesta, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola. Scala Regia, frescoed 1579–83. 436
- 10.1 Villard de Honnecourt, sketchbook 5v, c. 1230. 443
- 10.2 Giuliano da Sangallo, Taccuino Senese, 41v. 446
- 10.3 Giovanni Marcanova, *Collectio antiquitatum*, fol. 5r, 1471/post 1473. 449
- 10.4 Maso Finiguerra and circle. “Helen abducted by Paris” from “The Florentine Picture Chronicle”, 1470–75. 450
- 10.5 Giovanni Marcanova, *Collectio antiquitatum*, fol. 2r. 451
- 10.6 Maarten van Heemskerck, Roman sketchbook, Casa Galli, Rome with Michelangelo's *Bacchus*, c. 1532–36. 455
- 10.7 Mantegna, *Martyrdom of St Christopher*, Ovetari Chapel, Chiesa degli Eremitani. Padua, 1448–57. 456
- 10.8 Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian*, c. 1460. 457
- 10.9 Mantegna, *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome*, 1506. 458
- 10.10 Vault mosaic, Santa Costanza, Codex Escorialensis, fol. 4v, before 1509. 463
- 10.11 Ghirlandaio, *Annunciation to Zaccariah*, Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1486–90. 466
- 10.12 Desiderio da Settignano, Tomb of Carlo Marsuppini, Santa Croce, Florence, 1455–59. 467
- 10.13 Naldini, drawing (c. 1560) of Raphael, Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, Rome, 1517–18. 471
- 10.14 Palazzo Capodiferra-Spada, Rome. French anon. 16th century drawing. 471
- 10.15 Pietro Santi Bartoli after Polidoro da Caravaggio, antique style naval scene, c. 1660–90. 473
- 10.16 Garden façade, Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–87. 474
- 10.17 Raphael, Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, commenced 1513. 476
- 10.18 Raphael, Giulio Romano and assistants. Sala di Costantino, Vatican, 1520, completed 1585. 478
- 10.19 Giulio Romano and Primaticcio, Sala degli stucchi, Palazzo Tè, Mantua, c. 1529–30. 480

- 10.20 Francesco Rosselli, Ornamental borders, from *Life of the Virgin and Christ*. Florentine, 1490–1500. 481
- 10.21 Jacques Androuet du Cerceau after Antonio Fantuzzi's engraving in the style of Rosso, 1542/3. 483
- 10.22 Pen and ink drawing after Polidoro da Caravaggio and Francesco Maturino, showing trophies from façade of Palazzo Milesi, Rome, early sixteenth century. 486
- 10.23 Giulio Romano (d. 1546), design for a drinking cup, n. d. 488
- 10.24 Francesco Salviati, knife designs, engraved by Cherubino Alberti, 1583. 489
- 10.25 Circle of Perino del Vaga, design for a Festival Barge, c. 1530–40. 490
- 10.26 Parmigianino, studies for decoration of the transept arch, Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, c. 1531–40. 491
- 11.1 Bernardo Buontalenti and Bernardino Poccetti, Palazzo di Bianca Capello, Florence, 1570–74. 495
- 11.2 Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, *Le livre des grotesques* (*Grandes Grotesques*), 1556. 496
- 11.3 Owen Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, 1856, pl. 86*, Italian Ornament. University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Centre 497
- 11.4 Falconetto, Sala dello Zodiaco, Palazzo dell'Arco, Mantua, c. 1520. 499
- 11.5 Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*, c. 1530–31. 506
- 11.6 Mantegna, *Pallas expelling the Vices from the Garden of Venus*, 1502. 508
- 11.7 Donatello, capital of outside Pulpit, Prato, 1428–38. 511
- 11.8 School of Andrea Bregno, Funerary monument to Diotisalvi Neroni, Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 1482. 513
- 11.9 Nicoletto da Modena, drawing of grotesque ornament, c. 1507. 516
- 11.10 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Taccuino senese*, c. 1490–1516, 42v, ornamental designs. 517
- 11.11 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Taccuino senese*, 23r, study of the triumphal arch at Orange. 519
- 11.12 *Hypnerotomachia*, sig. f5r. 520
- 11.13 Pinturicchio, Basso Della Rovere Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, 1484. 522
- 11.14 Detail of fig. 13. 523
- 11.15 Perugino, Sala delle Udienze, Collegio del Cambio, Perugia, 1498–1500. 525
- 11.16 Filippino Lippi, *St Philip exorcising a demon at the altar of Mars*. Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1489–1502. 527

- 11.17 Luca Signorelli, Cappella San Brizio, Orvieto cathedral, 1499–1501. 529
- 11.18 Follower of Giovanni da Udine, early-mid 16th century. 532
- 11.19 Giovanni da Udine, festoons and animal painting, Loggia di Psiche, Villa Farnesina, Rome, 1517–18. 533
- 12.1 Raphael and Giovanni da Udine, Loggetta of Cardinal Bibiena, 1516. Vatican. 538
- 12.2 Raphael and workshop, Vatican Logge, 1518–19. 539
- 12.3 Vatican Logge, Pilaster v and vi, from print series by Carlo Lasinio (1759–1838). 542
- 12.4 Vatican Logge, Pilaster xi from print series by Carlo Lasinio (1759–1838). 546
- 12.5 Raphael, Giovanni da Udine and Giulio Romano, Loggia, Villa Madama, Rome, 1520. 547
- 12.6 Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Villa Madama, plan. 548
- 12.7 Villa Madama. From Giuseppe Vasi, *Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna* Book x, 1760. 550
- 12.8 Pirro Ligorio, Casino of Pius IV, Vatican, 1559–62. 556
- 12.9 Casino of Pius IV, Nymphaeum. From Giuseppe Vasi, *Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna* Book x, 1760. 557
- 12.10 Casino of Pius IV, loggia. 558
- 12.11 Casino of Pius IV, façade of palazzina. 560
- 12.12 Casino of Pius IV, portico of palazzina with rustic mosaic of the Dea natura. 561
- 12.13 Casino of Pius IV, palazzina, vault of first room. 564
- 12.14 Casino of Pius IV, palazzina, vault of second room. 564
- 12.15 Master of the die after Perino del Vaga, ornament print, 1532–53. 568
- 12.16 Marco da Faenza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Corridor of Terazza di Saturno, 1556–57. 580
- 12.17 Giovanni Andrea Paganini, detail of grottesche, Stanza della Fama, Palazzo Vitelli a Sant'Egidio, Città di Castello, c. 1574. 581
- 12.18 Jacopo Zucchi, Stanza degli uccelli, Pavilion of Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–77. 582
- 12.19 Jacopo Zucchi, Stanzino d'Aurora, Pavilion of Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–77. 584
- 12.20 Parmigianino, transept arch, Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, 1531–40. 585
- 12.21 Francesco Salviati, *Triumph of Furius Camillus*, Sala di Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, 1543–45. 587

- 12.22 Francesco Salviati, Sala dei Fasti Farnesi, Palazzo Farnese, Rome,
1552. 587
- 12.23 Francesco Salviati, Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, Rome, Sala Mappamundi,
1553–54. 589
- 12.24 Francesco Salviati, Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, Rome, Sala Mappamundi,
detail of Kairos. 590
- 13.1 Annibale and Agostino Carracci and workshop, Galleria Farnese,
Palazzo Farnese, Rome, 1597–1608. 593

Abbreviations

1 Journals and Anthologies

- CCCM *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*
CCSL *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*
CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
PG *Patrologia Series Graeca* ed. Migne
PL *Patrologia Series Latina* ed. Migne
Pauly-Wissowa *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
SAC *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento* ed. Paola Barocchi
TAC *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento: fra manierismo e Controriforma*
ed. Paola Barocchi
JWCI *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
Vasari Unless otherwise indicated the edition of the *Vite* used is *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* edited by Paola Barocchi and Rosanna Bettinari, Florence: Sansoni, 1966–2002.

2 Numbering and Abbreviations of the Manuscript Writings of Pirro Ligorio

The principal Ligorio manuscripts are held in the Archivio di Stato, Turin Ja.II.6.19–Ja.II.14.27 (Turin Group 1), Ja.III.3.1–Ja.III.15.13 and Ja.II.1.14–Ja.II.5.18 (Turin Group 2); Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples, XIII B1–10; Bodleian Library, Oxford Ms. Canon Ital. 138; Bibliothèque National, Paris, Cod. ital. 1129 (St. Germain 86).

For clarity, the Turin and Naples manuscripts quoted will be indicated by the volume number at the end of the manuscript number, so that Naples 1 means Naples XIII B1, Turin 8 means Turin Ja.III.10.8 and Turin 23 means Turin Ja.II.10.23. For the numbering, contents and dating of the manuscripts, see Charles Mitchell and Erna Mandowsky, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: the Drawings in MS XIII B7 in the National Library in Naples* (London: Warburg Institute, 1963); Anna Schreurs, *Antikenbild und Kunstanschauungen des Pirro Ligorio (1513–1583)* (Cologne: Walther König, 2000), 325–33.

Introduction

In a famous passage in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the protagonist Stephen Dedalus presents a definition of beauty which represents an aesthetic reworking of Scholastic tradition. He rehearses the three qualities necessary for beauty as defined by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*, 1.a.39.8: *integritas* or *perfectio*, *proportio* or *consonantia* and *claritas*.¹ He retains the first two terms but, coming to *claritas*, he rejects the notion of a

divine purpose in anything or a force of generalization which would make the esthetic image a universal one, make it outshine its proper conditions.²

In place of this metaphysical understanding of beauty, whose language of light recalls Neoplatonic doctrines of emanation (specifically John Scotus Eriugena's translation of pseudo-Dionysius), Stephen provides his version of an aesthetic apprehension of an object in its wholeness and immanence:

The instant wherein the supreme image of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state.³

Stephen recognises that *claritas*, where definition moves from proportion to light, is the point where the ontological status of art appears. For Stephen, *claritas* illuminates the relational character of aesthetic experience. We see this as he is at pains to remove the “force of generalization” which would universalise the image and so make it “outshine” the “proper conditions” of the aesthetic. Stephen's efforts to place wholeness and luminosity *within* the aesthetic image

1 “Nam ad pulchritudinem tria requirentur. Primo, integritas, sive perfectio quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt; et debita proportio sive consonantia et iterum claritas, unde quae habent colorem nitidum pulchra esse dicuntur”: “Three things are required for beauty. Firstly, soundness and perfection without which things become foul; and due proportion and harmony, and then again *claritas* which gives a shining grace and colour to things said to be beautiful”. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars edition, x (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1967).

2 Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 212–13.

3 Ibid.

as immanent qualities apprehended by the beholder, which then define the relational nature of aesthetic experience, show him in continuity with philosophical aesthetics as it has developed since the Enlightenment. His definition shows him wed this aesthetic tradition to Thomistic doctrines of relation and organic structure.⁴ Stephen is quite clear that what is lost in his aesthetics is what had once denoted participation in the universal.

This book is devoted to one thing which is lost as the apprehension of the beautiful changes from universal participation to relational experience of an integrated, immanent object. What is lost is ornament, and this book argues that a better understanding of ornament helps us to grasp the nature of the shift in the role and understanding of art from the pre-modern to the modern periods. Ornament is not only a kind of artistic activity, in the sense of decoration or embellishment. Like aesthetics, ornament concerned the apprehension of natural or artificial things as beautiful; the question is to understand what the nature of this apprehension was. Thus ornament was not just a 'thing' but a mode of conceiving and perceiving. This is evident in the ways that ornament is discussed in pre-Enlightenment poetics, rhetoric and art treatises—as 'light' or 'praise'. It is suggested by the Latin *ornatus* and Italian *ornato*, which are both nouns and adjectives, signifying a qualified state. Ornament concerned states, persons, artefacts and contexts, or environments. In discussion of ornament in rhetoric, Walter Ong noted:

the whole field over which *laus*, *honor*, *lumen* and *ornamentum* play is obviously one where the distinctions between persons and objects now made automatically at least by English speakers are more or less blurred.⁵

To elucidate the nature of ornament by theoretical speculation alone is a tricky business, given the profound transformation in its significance. I therefore attempt a historical reading informed by philosophy and reflective literature, which weaves across visual art and literature to grasp the range of ornament's significance, its capacity to appear at a variety of registers and its mediation at various levels.

Evaluation of ornament is inseparable from questions concerning the status of beauty and whether it can be regarded as the splendour of the good.

4 See Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (1959), trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 70–83, esp. 81–82 on the Thomist conceptions of *claritas* as "organising form manifesting itself" and on the proportion between viewer and object.

5 Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 278.

Ornament understood as the radiance which illuminates virtue, or the order which reveals the justice and harmony of the cosmos, thus has a relational character. This is distinct from the notion of relation in aesthetic accounts of the beautiful, where the focus is on the artwork as a totality of relations or the relation between artwork and beholder; the relational nature of ornament goes beyond the integrity of the aesthetic object as perfect in itself. It characteristically concerns the mediation between the adorned object and what is beyond or outside it. Matt Kavalier notes: "Ornament is relational, an enhancement or revision of something else primary to the discussion; it frames the primary object for consideration".⁶ The negative side of this relational character is that it can be potentially separable, applied from without as much as shining from within. This becomes problematic when dealing with works of artifice, in which the distinction between inherent and external, accidental qualities may not be clear.

Dominant Approaches in the Study of Ornament

Major studies of visual ornament, from Ruskin, Semper or Jones to Gombrich and David Brett, deal extensively with imitation of nature or nature's laws of ordering, and with the role of perception in apprehending and enjoying order.⁷ The assumption of the instinctive character of ornament often leads to a discussion of its primordial nature, whether viewed negatively in Adolf Loos' rejection of ornament as the primitive abandoned in the evolution of culture or positively as the fundamental expression of human creativity.⁸ Brett and Gombrich cite Gibsonian psychology and *Gestalt* theory, but this will not help us with early conceptions of ornament informed by the very different psychology of perception which developed principally in and from the Aristotelian tradition.⁹

6 Ethan Matt Kavalier, *Renaissance Gothic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 50.

7 See Gombrich's introduction to *The Sense of Order: a Study of the Psychology of Decorative Art* (London: Phaidon, 1979) on the "in-built sense of order" in organisms; David Brett, *Rethinking Decoration: Pleasure and Ideology in the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

8 Adolf Loos, *Ornament as Crime* (1908). Loos' arguments responded to Owen Jones' identification of ornament with primitive art, like the tattooed Maori head he presented as an exemplar of the instinct to decorate and of the "grace and naïveté" of art in its infancy; Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856, repr. London: Herbert Press, 2008), 31–33.

9 For this reason, I have not pursued approaches such as neuroaesthetics.

Within this tradition, the “inner senses” of faculty psychology (*sensus communis*, fantasy, memory, estimation and cogitation), which mediated between the perceptions of the sensory organs and the intellect, played a crucial role in the formation and perception of images.¹⁰ The formation of intellectual concepts relied on the capacity of the inner senses to harmonise, compare, combine and vary the impressions received by the particular senses. Located by Aristotle in the heart, by Plotinus and Avicenna in the brain, the *sensus communis* perceived harmonies and relations; it allowed one to make an analogy between proportion in a visual object and harmony or rhythm in music, for example.¹¹ The *sensus communis* could be seen as underlying the translations between visual, aural and textual which are so fundamental to rhetorical discussion of ornament from antiquity.

In the pre-Enlightenment world, the inner senses had an important link to ornament; in particular, they included the fantasy, source of combinations, unreal images and metaphors, and always closely associated with ornament.¹² The relationship between psychological processes and artistic invention would be central to art theory of the Italian sixteenth century (Cinquecento). Discussions of ornament as determined by psychologies of perception are thus

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- 10 On the “inner senses”, see David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense. Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
 - 11 For Aristotle’s discussion, see *De anima* 424a–427a. On the heart as the seat and source of sensation and movement, see *De partibus animalium* 656a, 665a and 667b, and *De motu animalium* 703a, which discusses the motive power of the innate spirit (*pneuma symphyton*) as located in the heart. For the seat of the *sensus communis* in the brain, close to the optic nerve, see Leonardo’s anatomical studies and his view of optics (*perspectiva*); see Martin Kemp, “‘Il concetto dell’anima’ in Leonardo’s early skull studies,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34, 1971, 115–34 and idem, *Leonardo da Vinci: the Marvellous Works of Nature and Man* (Oxford: OUP, 2006). Analogies between proportion in objects and in music were fostered by Greek terminology, as in the use of *rhythmos* of shape or composition; see J.J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1974, 22.
 - 12 I generally use ‘fantasy’ for its explicit derivation from phantasm; when discussing a classical source, I retain the form used (e.g. *phantasia*). I do not distinguish fantasy from imagination, unless the distinction is relevant to discussion; for history of the distinction, see Murray Bundy, *The Theory of the Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought*, *University of Illinois Studies in language and Literature*, 12 (1927); *De la Phantasia à l’Imagination*, ed. Danielle Lories and Laura Rizzerio (Louvain: Peeters, Société des études classiques, 2003). On the role of the inner senses in Islamic decoration, as considered in the *Optics* of Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham), see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll—Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, 1995), 201–03.

shaped by the nature of those psychologies—and by the changes in psychology itself as a discipline.¹³

Much discussion on ornament concerns the nineteenth century debates on design which arose in response to industrialisation—Owen Jones versus Ruskin on historicism and authenticity and Semper versus Riegl on technical process versus the expression of an immanent urge to form (*Kunstwollen*).¹⁴ These debates provide the immediate context for the rise of modernism and the fragmentation that followed the demise of the academic tradition. Amongst the most subtle of these comments are those of Walter Benjamin, who linked ornament or the “ornamental periphery in which the thing or being lies fixed” with the genuine *aura* of objects—that quality of the artwork which vanished in mechanical reproduction.¹⁵

Attention to the vicissitudes of ornament in the industrial age, culminating with the polemics of Loos and Le Corbusier, obscures the profound shifts which took place at an earlier stage. Industrialisation was only one element,

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- 13 On the changed significance of *sensus communis* in the Enlightenment, see Kant, *Critique of Judgement* trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), § 40, 159–62, where it is discussed as common human understanding, with taste claimed to be a kind of *sensus communis*. Cf. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif* (1765) on *sensus communis*: “signifiait chez les Romains non seulement sens commun, mais humanité, sensibilité”, quoted in Carlo Ossola, *Questo povero Cortegiano: Castiglione, il libro, la storia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000), 5. See also Gadamer on *sensus communis* in Vico and Shaftesbury, *Truth and Method*, second revised ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer, Donald Marshall (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 22–25.
 - 14 See Hans Sedlmayr, *Art in Crisis: The Lost Center*, translated Brian Battershaw (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1957); Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and other Writings* trans. Harry F. Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); David Brett, *On Decoration* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1992); idem, *Rethinking Decoration*; Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style (Stilfragen, 1893)*, trans. Evelyn Kain with glossary, annotations and introduction by David Castriota and preface by Henri Zerner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Riegl’s *Kunstwollen*, the “pervasive spirit or impulse motivating and shaping the art of certain ethnic groups or periods” (Castriota in Riegl, xxviii), developed in his study of late Roman art, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* (1901). For ornament as principal manifestation of *Kunstwollen*, see Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy; a Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (1908), trans. Michael Bullock (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997), 51: “it is of the essence of ornament that in its products the artistic volition of a people finds its purest and most unobscured expression”.
 - 15 Walter Benjamin, *Protocols to the Experiments on Hashish, Opium and Mescaline 1927–1934*, trans. Scott J. Thomson, “Protocol 5: March 1930”, <http://www.wbenjamin.org/protocoli>, retrieved May 26, 2012.

and to identify the story of ornament with the story of craft is to limit it to the status of object. The effects of mechanical reproduction were so profound for the 'decorative arts' because they were already reduced to an identification with style and the history of stylistic 'progressions'. By this late point the fine arts-decorative arts (*arti minori*) distinction was already established and the pre-Enlightenment understanding in the distant past. The deeper question about how ornament could be identified with style belongs to an earlier age—to the Renaissance.

An authoritative theoretical contribution to the fine art-decorative arts division lay in Kant's distinction between "free" and "dependent" beauty, *pulchritudo vaga* and *pulchritudo adhaerens* in *Critique of Judgement* § 16, which correspond to "pure" and "intellectualised" judgements of taste, the latter judgement being limited by the end the beautiful object serves.¹⁶ Examples of *pulchritudo vaga* include flowers and birds of paradise, ornamented frames, wallpaper, carpets or music not set to words (like a musical *fantasia*); examples of *pulchritudo adhaerens* are man, the horse, architecture and poetry, or figurative art. In the second case, the ideal of beauty (specifically, the human form) is inseparable from its purposiveness and this end, with its expression of the moral, elevates it over the "pure judgement of taste" in *pulchritudo vaga*. (Kant's distinction ignores the ornamental use of the human figure which is central to Renaissance decoration.)¹⁷ Kant notes the extrinsic status of ornament or *parerga* at § 14, where he distinguishes between ornament which increases the taste's liking by form (picture frames, drapery on statues and colonnades) and ornament *qua* colour (gilding on a frame) which is non-formal and "merely attached", the latter being denigrated as finery which impairs genuine beauty.¹⁸ Kant's *pulchritudo vaga* influences the modern studies of Brett and Oleg Grabar's *The Mediation of Ornament* (1992), which assume the

16 See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 44–49; Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 39, 43, 45, 53, 57–112; Brett, *Rethinking Decoration*, 20–26. The term *vaga*, with its meaning of wandering or uncertain, appears in the Renaissance terminology of beauty. Mihaela Criticos, "The Ornamental Dimension: Contributions to a Theory of Ornament", *New Europe College Yearbook*, (2004), 201, sees Kant as the basis of Bernard Berenson's distinction between decorative and illustrative aspects in an artwork.

17 See Alina Payne, "Reclining bodies: figural ornament in Renaissance Sculpture", in *Body and Building. Essays on the Changing relation of Body and Architecture* ed. George Dodds and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 2002), 94–113.

18 Cf. *Critique of Judgement* § 51, 323–324, on interior decoration, furnishing, design of flower beds and attire as forms of painting in which "the imagination [is] in free play, and occupying the aesthetic power of judgment without a determinate purpose".

hedonistic character of ornament, arising from its “freedom” from cultural specificity.¹⁹ Commenting on the *parergon*, Derrida notes that the “problem of parergon . . . had arisen in the course of the exposition of the category of relation”—the lack of purposiveness perceived in the judgement of beauty.²⁰ The slipperiness of descriptions of ornament lies in these questions of end and relation, and in the relation of ornament to formal or ideal concepts of species.²¹ These issues which preoccupy Kantian treatments of *pulchritudo vaga* arise in Renaissance discussions of ornament and receive considerable attention, as we shall see.

Another great strand in research on ornament is the search for the origins and development of motifs, typified by the studies of Semper and Riegl.²² Riegl's formalism neglected symbolic, ritual or practical function.²³ Semper argued that motifs originated in the technical origins of crafts and that standard forms or “primordial ideas” followed principles of development or “generative principles” of symmetry, proportion and direction analogous to biological laws.²⁴ Owen Jones similarly stated that decoration which commanded admiration

19 Grabar notes “the penalty of freedom in the arts is loss of meaning. Its reward is accessibility to all” and likens geometric ornament to butterflies because “we are attracted by an abstraction which seems to be devoid of cultural specificity”, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 154. The book ends by stating that ornament is about pleasure which gives the observer the right and freedom to choose meanings.

20 Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, 57 ff.

21 Ibid., III, on difficulty in conceiving an ideal of “vague beauty”; ideal beauty will give rise to partly intellectualised judgement of taste, not the pure judgement of taste.

22 Riegl's *Stilfragen* traces the appearance and formal development of lotus, volute calyx, palmette, papyrus, “sacred tree” and “palmette-tree”. See Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 4–5, 22–26, 32–40, on the distortion and dissemination of Semper's arguments on the technical-materialist origin of decoration in *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten; oder, Praktische Ästhetik*, (1860–63) and *Die vier Elemente der Baukunst* (*The Four Elements of Architecture*), (1851). For Semper, see *Four Elements*; Nicola Squicciarino, *Arte e ornamento in Gottfried Semper* (Venice: Il Cardo, 1994). Brett, *Rethinking Decoration*, 217–50, reiterates Semper's arguments on the craft origins of motifs.

23 See *Problems of Style*, 160, 348 on the ivy tendril in early Boeotian or Attic ceramics as a palmette motif; Riegl ignores the function of the decorated object and the ornament it could have prompted (vine or ivy tendril on a drinking cup).

24 See *Prospectus: Comparative Theory of Building* (1852) and the Prolegomenon to *Der Stil*, in *Four Elements*, 168–71; 183; 198–210; “Theorie des Formell-Schönen” in *Gottfried Semper: In search of Architecture* trans. Wolfgang Hermann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 230–32, 234–41.

could “always be found to be in accordance with the laws which regulate the distribution of forms in nature”.²⁵

This book concerns how ornament was formerly understood rather than searching for its formal, ritual or technical origins. This understanding concerns what ornament does, rather than what certain decorative motifs mean.²⁶ The question of how ornament was conceived helps to clarify the relations between ornament *qua* ordering, *qua* embellishment and *qua* frame. For the nineteenth century scholars, the historicist character of ornament was integral to its meaning and application. This kind of historicist understanding emerges in the Renaissance, as part of its transformation of ornament, when it however co-exists with other conceptions.

This book takes ornament in the Italian Renaissance and its sources to circa 1600 as its case study.²⁷ I argue that the understanding of ornament undergoes a profound shift in the Renaissance, under the impact of antiquarianism, revival of ancient rhetoric, perspective and the development of art theory centred on the essential nature of form. The results of this shift prepare for the development of Enlightenment aesthetics, with its emphasis on the immanent character of aesthetic judgements and relational character in the experience of artworks.²⁸ The notion of the immanent character of beauty appears already in Thomist aesthetics of the organism and its stress on the relation and proportion between object and viewer.

25 Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, 18.

26 Cf. Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 226: “ornament does not really consist of tangible and identifiable forms, because all forms can be manipulated into meaning, and the most specific of iconophoric subjects can be drowned in ornament”. Grabar sees ornament as *carrying* beauty, in keeping with its intermediary role. Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, trans. C. Hogan and George Kubler (New York: Schultz Wittenborn, 1948, repr. New York: Zone Books, 1989), 67, suggests that the genealogy and morphology of ornament should not obscure the fundamental importance of its relation of form to space.

27 The early material discussed means that I do not employ the ornament-decoration distinction which regards ornament as a sub-species of decoration; see for example James Trilling in *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 23. This distinction is inapplicable to pre-modern linguistic uses of ornament and adorning, as quality and process.

28 See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 31, on aesthetic judgement in Kant and Baumgarten, who coins the term “Aesthetics” for his science of sense cognition; Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* trans. Fritz Koelln and James Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951, repr. 1979), 338–57. For an overview of concepts of ornament from antiquity to the post-modern, see Criticos, “Ornamental Dimension”, 185–219.

The approaches noted above neglect the central role of ornament in a rich tradition of verbal-visual exchange in Western art from antiquity to the early twentieth century.²⁹ Ornament in visual arts and in speech is not the same, given the different conditions of representation in the arts, yet an account of ornament requires movement between the arts. This is because of the constant reference to the visual in literary discussions of ornament, and the use made of literary (in particular, rhetorical) sources in visual ornament of the Renaissance. At a deeper level these crossovers between the arts reflect ornament's role in the creation of settings; this is one aspect of its involvement with theatre and ceremonial.

Ornament illuminates much about relations between the arts, but these relations should not be limited to verbal-visual themes. The shift in the conception of ornament is also illustrated by the transformation in the understanding of music from the representation of the universal context (*harmonia mundi*) to a form of affective experience, as it is discussed by the seventeenth century.

Music as *harmonia mundi* leads us to the dual understanding of the Greek *kosmos* as order and ornament.³⁰ This understanding appears as late as Semper, who cited Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos* in a 1853 London lecture where he discussed ornament, architecture, dance and music as "cosmic art", which aim to "decorate 'lawfully'" or play as "the aesthetic mimicry of the world's lawful and rhythmic order".³¹ Dance, another of Semper's non-narrative "cosmic arts", has like ornament become marginalised since the rise of aesthetics. Periods of highly ornate art, such as late Gothic, can also suffer neglect.³² Kavalier reads late Gothic ornament as "pictures of geometry"—a decorative

29 One sign of this lack is the poverty of terminology for discussing ornament. See David Castriota, *The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Imagery of Abundance in Later Greek and Early Roman Imperial Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 61, on the inadequate descriptive character of "old catchalls" such as "inhabited vinescroll," "peopled scrolls," or "grotesques".

30 For Renaissance discussions of Pythagorean-based accounts of *harmonia mundi*, see Claude Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Musical Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Giofesso Zarlino in the 1558 *Istitutioni armoniche* (Venice: Franceschi, 1562), 6, notes the dual sense of *kosmos* in the introduction to his discussion of *musica mundana* and the microcosmic analogy.

31 Semper, *Four Elements*, 30 on Humboldt; 33 for Semper's concept of "cosmic art" in "Theorie des Formell-Schönen"; 36–7 for the role of play in the prolegomenon of *Der Stil*.

32 Ornament in Gothic art lies beyond the scope of this book; see Kavalier, *Renaissance Gothic*, esp. 4–5, 50–113, 199–229, on vegetal ornament.

ordering which “encourages the viewer to discover the underlying system of proportions” and “restore a sense of order”.³³

What is required is an account of ornament which relates it to early philosophical reflections on ordering, the reflections which led to the postulation of universal ordering as *kosmos*. Semper dwelt on the ‘cosmic’ but looked for biological analogies in the organisation of plants or crystals rather than looking at thought and language. The affinities between ornament and music seen by Semper, Jones and Wornum pointed towards the ‘universal’ character of ornament, as Semper recognised when he grouped ornament with the ‘cosmic’ arts of music and dance, rather than with the plastic arts. Semper also articulated the relation between thing, state and act in ornament when he noted “Whatever is adorned is the memorial of adornment”.³⁴

Jones concludes the *Grammar of Ornament* with a celebration of the “order, the symmetry, the grace, the fitness” of creation whose ultimate antecedents are Stoic and Platonic praises of the world in its order and adornment.³⁵ The relation between visual ordering and order, exemplified by the world as the work of the creator and the paradigm for human *poiesis*, pervades pre-Enlightenment understanding of ornament. The biological sources for motifs explored from Semper to Gombrich have their ancestry in a wider understanding of ornament as the variety of species which appears in commentaries on Genesis (hexaemeral literature) and on Plato’s *Timaeus*.

If we want to explore the ‘origins’ of ornament, or the ‘origins’ which it supposedly reveals, it is instructive to begin with early Greek thought, at the point where *kosmos* starts to be used of the universal order, or the “world in its aspect of order”.³⁶ Gregory Vlastos in *Plato’s Universe* notes the affinity of order and adornment in *kosmos*:

33 Kavalier, “Gothic as Renaissance: Ornament, Excess, and Identity, circa 1500”, in *Renaissance Theory* ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2008), 115–58, at 121, 125; *Renaissance Gothic*, 56–68. Cf. Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 154, who sees ornament as the embodiment of geometry, which gives it social presence and meaning: “Geometry remains at its most powerfully creative when it is connected with the continuous life forces of a society”.

34 Semper, Prolegomena to *Der Stil in Four Elements*, 210. In the same passage he described the memorial as “a reflection of the unitary idea opposing the *plurality*, which through the peripheral rhythmic sequence becomes a unity itself”.

35 Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, 479.

36 Gregory Vlastos, *Plato’s Universe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 6.

no one, without knowledge of Greek, would recognize [the cosmetic] as a blood-relation of the cosmic. In Greek the affinity with the primary sense is perspicuous since what *kosmos* denotes is a crafted, composed, enhanced ordering.³⁷

Pre-Socratic cosmology is illuminating for an understanding of ornament because the ideas of *kosmos* it postulated concern the patterning of opposing or contrary qualities as principles of universal order, which entail limit and definition. As Joan Evans noted

The first essential of decoration is a defined and limited space . . . once a civilization has reached a point where it can define and limit an empty space, the decorative arts are created in response to its appeal.³⁸

Henri Focillon similarly described ornament as

perhaps the first alphabet of our human thought to come into contact with space . . . a kind of observatory from which it is possible to discern certain elementary, generalized aspects of the life of forms . . . it shapes its own environment, to which it imparts a form.³⁹

A similar point is made in a rhetorical, or sophist, account of artistic creation:

through measure in rhythm and sound the artist conveys measure or proportion in meaning according to patterns of thought which are primordial—the patterns of identity and antithesis— and therefore universally appealing.⁴⁰

Through early cosmology, we can find a deeper understanding of ornament which can take it beyond association with the primitive or infantile. In this way, we can also consider the kinds of art which various metaphysics and psychologies permit, according to their conception of form, quality, visual order

37 Ibid., 3.

38 Joan Evans, *Pattern* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), I, xxxv–xxxvi.

39 Henri Focillon, *Life of Forms*, 66.

40 A. Rostagni, “Un nuovo capitolo nella storia della retorica e della sofistica”, *Scritti minori*, Turin 1955, quoted in Nancy Struever, *The Language of History in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 12.

and the nature of vision. In so doing, we open up a mode of conceiving the relation between art and ontology that goes beyond aesthetics.⁴¹

Outline of Chapters

By the late Renaissance in Italy, the ground has been largely prepared for the subsequent development of aesthetics. The book suggests how this shift occurred, so that ornament became associated with historical style and stylistic qualities, such as colour or grace. This requires a rehearsal of ancient ideas of art which occupies the first three chapters. While this could not be a book on ancient art, and the material is selected for its relevance to later art, I have tried not to present antique art and literature as mere sources but to give a more suggestive account of their richness.

Chapter 1, which sets out many of the ideas which animate the work, starts with the appearance of ornament as pattern and as *kosmos*, whose primary meaning of ordering/ ornament is extended to signify universal ordering. Such qualitative pattern is identified with the species in accounts of the “adorning” of the world, *exornatio mundi*, in hexaemeral literature, the commentaries on Genesis. In Christian accounts of *exornatio mundi*, the creation of species in sky, water and land, ornament becomes distinct from primary ordering and secondary to it. This chapter sets out an important theme—the created world as exemplar of ornament, and paradigm for works of artifice.

Chapter 2 considers the other fundamental way of conceiving ornament, the rhetorical view and its associations with sophistry. In place of relations between nature and artifice, relations between the arts appear here, in particular word-image relations. The conjunction of sophistic illusion with cosmic or hexaemeral themes is discussed in Chapter 3, devoted to antique and medieval discussions of decoration in visual art. The tension between ‘cosmic’ and sophistic themes in discussions of ornament will reappear throughout the work.

The remaining chapters describe the movement towards an aesthetic, historicist, affective and stylistic view of ornament in the Renaissance, starting with the discussion of architecture in fifteenth century civic Humanism in Chapter 4. Chapters 5 and 6 work with Humanist uses of literary ornament, including the view of words as artefacts to be collected or ‘set’, discussions of

41 See Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: the Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2004); Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and idem, *Judgment of Sense*.

imitation, of *varietas*, and the role of the topics as a mode of generating and ordering variety. This section culminates with Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano*; Castiglione stands at the mid-point of our argument, as he shows the extension of similar conditions of artifice through all levels of representation and provides the arguments for the movement into visual art.

Chapter 7 examines the assimilation of ornament to style and modal qualities such as grace or manner in Renaissance art treatises, often drawing on literary discussions and indebted to Aristotelianism for their ontological substructure—as well as exhibiting apparently Platonic concerns. Literary influences shaped major themes, with colour often discussed in terms borrowed from rhetoric rather than as a topic in optics. We then consider the transformation of *perspectiva* as optics rooted in ontology to perspective in the sense of a pre-fabricated mode of legitimate construction for use in artistic simulations, as schematised by Alberti and Serlio's scenography. Serlio shows a markedly sophisticated character in the concern with the use of perspective to create a self-contained world of artifice and 'wonders'.

Subsequent chapters concern ornament as fragment—specifically, antique fragment—and reflect on how historicism enters into concepts of ornamental value. Chapter 8 works together scenography with the use of theatricals, such as triumph for the display of antiquities and the "return" of the antique, focussing on Rome. Chapter 9 discusses fragmentary ornaments in the sense of devices or *imprese*, emblems and 'hieroglyphs' which became a focus for discussion of verbal-visual relations and of metaphor. They also inherit and trivialise old cosmic analogies, which become the basis of 'ingenious' decorative inventions.

Chapter 10 pursues ornamental invention as a distinct area of design, charting the movement from aggregative display focused on *spolia* and the attempt to create a stylistically unified classicism, exemplified by the letter to Leo X attributed to Raphael. The emergence of ornamental design, notable in Raphael's followers, is also the expression of the artist's *disegno*, which manifests itself in all his inventions, from monumental to minor. What starts to disappear here is the framing role of ornament, as it becomes instead a kind of manifestation of an artist's distinctive manner—ornament may be both what is represented and how. Ornament is passing into an exhibition of style, associated with an artist (manner) or a period (historicism).⁴²

42 See Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 231, on post-Quattrocento art where style takes over from ornament the 'intermediary' role of perceiving and judging, appreciating and valuing works: "in this sense, style is ornament". Grabar refers to ornament as a "manner of compelling a relationship between objects or works of art and viewers or users" (ibid., 230).

This appears in the most distinctive type of Renaissance ornament—grotesquework, treated in the final chapters. From trophy-type aggregations, *grotesche* grow into a decorative field—an ornamental meta-painting in which fragmentary images of all things and genres may be located. I argue that the painted *grotesche* develop as a counterpart to the illusionist architecture of perspectival room, and must be considered in relation to it. They also thematise the role of the combinatory imagination in the creation of synthetic style and in contemporary art treatises, with their Aristotelian underpinnings and undeclared sophistic inheritance.

We end by noting the problems that arise when ornament is inflated to include the historicism of antiquarianism and the artificiality of scenic projection alongside traditional representations of ‘cosmic’ ordering. The multiplication of levels and kinds of ornament results in a situation where its mediating role is overwhelmed by the density and inflation of the mediating structure. Such a situation requires simplification, but the simplification which occurred was to reduce ornament to a formal, stylistic manifestation, placed within the artifice of the scenic representation. Ornament could mediate levels of representation within the scene, so that its framing role was diminished to that of fantasy architecture within a scene—or it could be absorbed into the artist’s manner, appearing as the grace of forms. The great decorative cycles of the Carracci in the Galleria Farnese, Rome or of Pietro da Cortona in Palazzo Pitti, Florence exemplify the first possibility, Guido Reni’s *Atalanta and Hippomenes* (1625, Madrid, Prado) typifies the second.

What has changed is the conception of the frame and ornament’s unique capacity to figure a framework for showing something else: to enhance and mediate beauty while also being something that is not just aesthetic or artificial display. Once ornament becomes the extension of artifice or manifestation of sensual pleasure in aesthetic experience, the tension it carries between art and not-art has fallen away. This appears in the dwindling of ornament’s ordering into the cosmetic and into décor, where framing becomes an arbitrary, superficial or even specious arrangement. This oblivion was underpinned intellectually by the changes in cosmology in the late Renaissance and the associated debunking of *musica universalis*. However, I would suggest that the loss of ornament’s significance came also from within the sphere of artistic activity and reflection, as ornament is placed increasingly ‘within’ artistic invention.

Writing about ornament is difficult, first because it created conditions for narrative rather than having its own narrative and second because it requires working against the conception of the aesthetic which has dominated thinking on art since the eighteenth century. The range of thought on ornament in the Renaissance is daunting and tends in a variety of directions; a conception

of ornament as modular leads to something different from reflections on ornament and qualitative proportion, for example.

Certain themes reappear like motifs through the book, like the garland or triumph, which concerns the illumination or performance of praise, the relationship between exemplarity and divinity, the temporality of return and the semantic character of displayed objects. The link between theatre and ornament runs throughout the work, in the ancient Platonic and hexaemeral theme of creation as a spectacle which raises the beholder to contemplation and in the association between scenography and sophistry.⁴³ Ornament and scenographic theatre work to establish the modes of relation between the forms of artifice.

Certain areas have been neglected, thus my treatment of medieval material has been brief. I distanced the study from theological and liturgical discussions of ornament, including the huge topic of iconoclasm, as I felt that the theological issues could overwhelm the other lines of argument which I wished to address.⁴⁴ This has also meant that the Augustinian tradition has not received the same weight as Platonic and Aristotelian thought. The significance of ornament cannot be elucidated by philosophical approaches alone, but traditional conceptions of ornament are underpinned by philosophical terms, such as genus-species categories or Aristotelian ideas of the actualisation of form. The attention to philosophical thought in the work should complement the insights derived from approaches that discuss ornament from the perspective of material culture, and related themes such as patronage.⁴⁵

I have not given central attention to the relation of ornament and gender, which takes both positive and negative forms, as Nature clothed in the beauty and variety of the species or the meretricious, deceptive frivolity of cosmetic embellishment. The ancient and enduring association of women and ornament intimates that women display wholeness—or are made complete—insofar as they are related to something not themselves and outside themselves. As with

43 On relations between theatre and visual arts, see Caroline van Eck and Stijn Bussels, eds., *The Visual Arts and the Theatre in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley, 2011).

44 A passage from the *Vita S. Stephani iun.*, col. 1120 quoted in Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 152, describes a church whose holy images are replaced by mosaics with vegetal decoration and animal motifs and which is said to be unadorned. When images of “Christ’s mysteries” are forbidden, images of creation are not seen as *exornatio mundi* but rather as turning a church into a “store-house of fruit” or “aviary”. The passage underlines ornament’s lack of a *typos*.

45 See *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550–1750*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014), esp. 8–17 on display and proxemics.

theological arguments, the size of the gender theme would have pulled the book away from the material I wanted to consider. The book however contains allusions which could aid such study, whose theoretical kernel I would see as concerning questions of relation.

The movement between literature and visual arts means that more could be said on each theme; I wanted to establish lines of inquiry which others may pursue in a more specialised fashion. Certain themes and artists such as Peruzzi, Sansovino and Falconetto, received insufficient coverage to keep length and detail within manageable limits. The role of the ornament print is signalled rather than explored. Also for reasons of detail, musicology is given little direct discussion, although *musica universalis* underpinned art's cosmic analogies and forms a constant background of discussions.

The arguments and bibliography in each chapter reveal the works which shaped specific areas. On a general level, certain works helped by forging pathways into richer readings of historical ornament. Amongst these are Alina Payne's studies on the role of ornament in architectural treatises, Hellmut Wohl's *Aesthetics of Renaissance Art* for its account of ornament as antiquarian, as manner and decoration, Branko Mitrović's discussions of the intellectual character of sixteenth century (Cinquecento) art treatises and Leonard Barkan's remarks on fragment and modularity in Renaissance art.⁴⁶ Sandström's *Levels of Unreality* provided a valuable guide to reading of illusionist decoration and the undermining of the *istoria* by the false architecture which encloses it, so that we read the *istoria* not as a scene but an object.⁴⁷ George Hersey's *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* insists on ornament's commemoration of its ritual origins and the metaphoric character it carries into its uses.⁴⁸

46 Alina Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Italian Renaissance: Architectural Invention, Ornament and Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; idem, "Reclining Bodies"; Branko Mitrović, *Serene Greed of the Eye: Leon Battista Alberti and the Philosophical Foundations of Renaissance Architectural Theory* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2005); idem, *The Theory of Proportions in Daniele Barbaro's Commentary on Vitruvius' De architectura*, (doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1996; publ. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI dissertation service, 1996); Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); idem, "The Heritage of Zeuxis: Painting, Rhetoric and Antiquity", in *Antiquity and its Interpreters* ed. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, Rebekah Smick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 99–109.

47 Sven Sandström, *Levels of Unreality: Studies of structure and construction in Italian mural painting during the Renaissance* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1963).

48 George Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture. Speculation on Ornament from Vitruvius to Venturi* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

Beyond works which delineate discussion in Renaissance art are those which shaped my thought and approach at a reflective level. These works share in their endeavours to take the philosophical discussion of art—or of the philosophical nature of art—beyond the themes of aesthetics. David Summers' presentation of ornament in relation to movement, *rilievo* and quality and its relation with the sophistic and the Aristotelian traditions in *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* I found profoundly helpful, as is his invaluable treatment of the "inner senses" in *The Judgment of Sense*. Gadamer's account of the subjectivisation of aesthetics since Kant, his discussion of the Humanist tradition and of the limitations of art conceived as an object of aesthetic consciousness, his attention to the temporality of presentation of play and his reflections on architecture and ornament in *Truth and Method* provide a masterly narrative against which to reflect on the disappearance of traditional understandings of ornament with the rise of aesthetics. Dalibor Vesely's *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* likewise gave a rich discussion of the movement from ontology to claims for representational autonomy in architecture, which shares its situating role with ornament. Ernesto Grassi's *Rhetoric and Philosophy* and *Renaissance Humanism* provided insights into Humanist rhetoric and philology.⁴⁹ Nancy Struever's *The Language of History in the Renaissance* gives valuable discussion of the sophistic origins of self-conscious artistry and aestheticism in Humanism, its development of a non-Platonic notion of form and its association of history and illusion. Peter Carl's reading of the layered temporality of ornament in "Architecture and Time" and "Ornament and Time" gave a rich and challenging reading to which I often returned in teasing out my own ideas.⁵⁰

The present work is distinguished by its long historical view, and its weaving across the arts. The purpose of the book is to restore ornament to a worthy object of intellectual consideration. It is not an account of the development of design but an *essai* to see how we can approach ornament with richer understanding. This is not solely a means of enriching historical understanding; it is useful in the present, as ornament is still with us.

49 Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980); *Renaissance Humanism: Studies in Philosophy and Poetics* (Binghamton NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1988).

50 Peter Carl, "Architecture and Time: a Prolegomena", *AA Files* 22 (1991), 48–65, continued as "Ornament and Time: a Prolegomena." *AA Files*, 23 (Summer 1992), 49–64.

PART 1

Ancient Prolegomena



Kosmos

From Pattern to Kosmos

This first section brings together the classical sources and classically-derived concepts of ornament which will be used through the book. A full study of ornament in classical antiquity, as concept, motif or artefact is sadly beyond the scope of this study, so the arguments privileged are those which appear most relevant for Renaissance discussions. This first chapter will examine two aspects of ornament: first, its role as pattern and second the ‘cosmic’ views of ornament as the perfection and beauty of creation in its wholeness, “the fairest of all that has become” as Plato writes in *Timaeus* 28b. The philosophical material treated in this speculative part of the argument is used for its relevance to the understanding of ornament; since ornament is not a conceptual tool it did not develop these reflections philosophically but through its history it is affected directly by the varying views of the relation between art and ontology.

As we saw in the introduction, the term *kosmos* with its related derivatives carries meanings of order and ornament. Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote on the association of terms for ornament with verbs denoting fittingness or sufficiency; what is adorned is increased in efficacy and thereby made more in act or being, a notion which lingers in the derivation of ‘majesty’ from *maior*.¹ Ornament thus provides attributes which make something be in a state of ‘moreness’, yet this addition reveals a thing as perfect or appropriate. Ornament, argues Coomaraswamy, originally implied proper equipment in the sense of completion without which things or persons were not efficient or useful, as a deity could not function without attributes.² Coomaraswamy provides helpful elucidation of this difficulty of the ‘more’ which ornament brings when he comments that ornament is related to its subject as individual nature to essence, calling it “adjectival” and remarking that a person or thing apart from appropriate ornaments is valid as an idea but not as a species.³ There is also an adverbial character to ornament, as Edmond Pottier noted when he called it a mode of action which brought advantages to the possessor:

1 Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Ornament”, *Art Bulletin* 21, 4, (1939), repr. *Selected Papers: Traditional Art and Symbolism* 1, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton: Bolligen, 1977), 241–53.

2 *Ibid.*, 252.

3 *Ibid.*

“L'ornement . . . avait été, avant tout, un moyen d'action qui procurait des avantages réels au possesseur”.⁴ We shall see this modal understanding developed in the rhetorical tradition.

Coomaraswamy's essay gives helpful conceptual guidance as well as etymological interest. His discussion of the attribute which renders something more effective recalls the Latin *ornatus* as equipment, to which we shall return. The adjectival character noted by Coomaraswamy will not however elucidate the principal function of visual ornament—that of framing, usually represented as pattern. While ornament is not exclusively a visual phenomenon, its most distinctive and significant appearance is in visual arts, so it is important to tackle its fundamental character as frame and pattern. Framing includes the articulation of terminating and crowning elements which mark the limits of an element and the points where it enters into relation with other things.

First we should recall the features exhibited by pattern. Pattern arises from the repetition of an image into a motif. The recurrence of the motif means that it alternates with something other than itself, in horizontal or vertical registers. This can be empty space, like the silence which creates acoustic rhythm, or it can be some form of inversion of the motif—an inversion created by switching the colours of motif and ground, a change or reversal of spatial orientation or alternation with a motif which has a contrary profile, like the radial blossom and cone-shaped bud.⁵ These repetitions create a division and show reiteration or alternation, in particular alternation between opposites or contraries.⁶ This rhythmic alternation of opposites, or of form and formlessness, is fundamental and universal to pattern.⁷ The choice and deployment of pattern motifs through cultures and over history shows great consistency, exhibiting the same principles of repetition, symmetry, alternation, inversion and progression through repeated representation of contraries. Pattern motifs are characteristically either geometric or vegetal, showing plants stylised to stress

4 Ibid., 251, quoting Pottier, “Céramique peinte de Suse”, *Memoires de la Délégation en Perse* xiii (1912), 50.

5 The alternation of open blossom and closed bud, first used in Egypt, became stylised into the egg and dart motif of Ionic Greek entablatures via Aeolic Greek precursors, and provides another case of alternation. See Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 56, annotation 314.

6 Riegl shows the painted ceiling decoration from Tomb 33, Necropolis at Thebes, with running spiral motifs and the Mycenaean stone relief ceiling from the tholos at Orchomenos (ibid., 73; 120–22, Figs. 26, 55, 56 120–22).

7 See Gombrich, *Sense of Order*, 72, “Pattern-making is its most general form may be characterised as an ordering of elements by identity and difference”. On the universality of rhythm, see ibid., 10–14, 38, on Ralph Wornum's discussion of rhythm as a basis of ornament, in *Analysis of Ornament. The Characteristics of Style: an Introduction to the Study of the History of Ornamental Art* (1855; 3rd edition London: Chapel and Hall, 1869), 24.

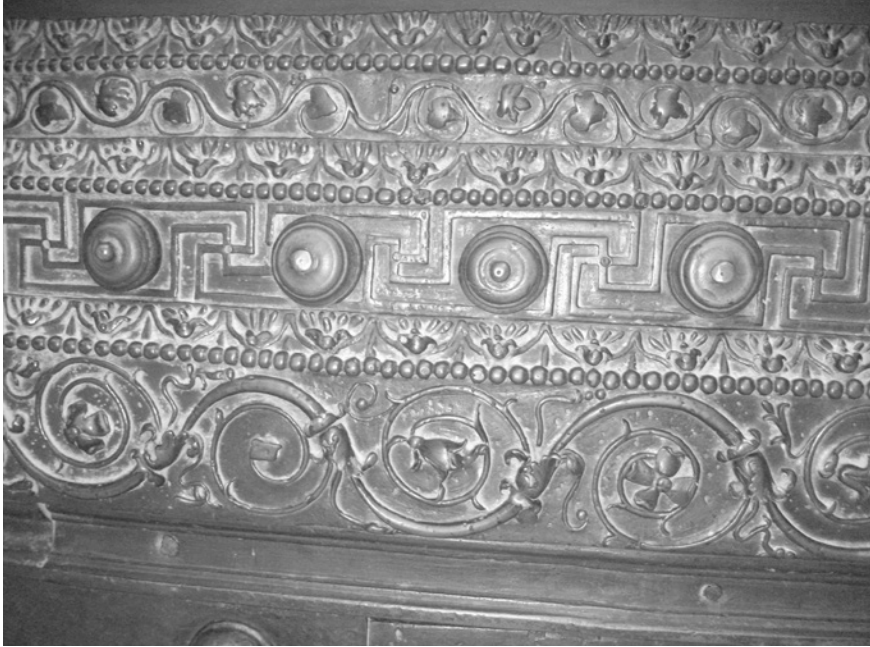


FIGURE 1.1 *Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, south exit of inner narthex. Relief of Vestibule door, removed from Temple at Cydnus, second century BCE, and placed in Hagia Sophia in 838.*
COURTESY HAGIA SOPHIA MUSEUM, ISTANBUL. PHOTO: AUTHOR.

symmetry and regular alternation, like the tendril line with its up-down alternation, or the interlace which creates a rhythm of meetings and separations.⁸

Pattern which creates limits and shows contraries related through proportion is prior to the conceptualisation of individual entities which are adorned.⁹ The second view requires the postulation of subjects as a composite of essence

8 Riegl regarded the “rhythmic dynamic tendril”, as “the most aesthetically pleasing way of unifying [decorative] motifs”, the “line of beauty” and “the ultimate ideal of all vegetal ornament” and saw it as the contribution of Greek art to the motifs inherited from Egypt and the Ancient Near East (*Problems of Style*, 52, 105). Before the development of the tendril motif, the guilloche, comprised of two interlaced wavy lines, appears in Mesopotamian ornament, such as glazed bricks from Nimrud.

9 Cf. Semper’s view of the perception of pattern and ornament (“the wreath . . . the scroll, the circular dance and the rhythmic tone”) as the beginnings from which the “cosmic arts” of music and architecture grew (*Prolegomena to Der Stil*, in *The Four Elements of Architecture*, 196). See also introduction to “Theorie des Formell-Schönen”, in Hermann, *Gottfried Semper*, 219: “the cosmic instinct manifests itself at the earliest stage of civilization”, where Semper discusses “tectonics”, music and dance as cosmic arts. Semper saw sculpture and song as “microcosmic” and painting, poetry and drama as “historical”.

and accident which is formulated with Aristotle; once this conception arises, and provides a philosophical definition of things as individual substances, ornament's association with the accidental and cosmetic has an ontological foundation.¹⁰ Both Plato and Aristotle see the problems of postulating qualitative contraries as first principles and make a critique of contraries-based theories a starting point for establishing their own ontologies.¹¹

The philosophical approaches which can help elucidate the role of pattern are—in Western Culture—the ideas concerning the interaction of the elements which appear in pre-Socratic thought, in Anaximander and Empedocles, leading to the theories of universal design in Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic thought. Still more ancient sources lie in Vedic thought, such as the Creation Hymn, *Rig Veda* 10.129, which speaks of the poets extending a cord across non-existence, after which creation arises.¹² These Sanskrit sources remain beyond the present book.

Anaximander's idea of order as arising from boundless unity or *apeiron* provides the earliest description of a cosmology which shows the division of limit from limitless.¹³ Anaximander's vision of a cycle of creation and destruction of opposing entities ordered in time as a dyad or reparation of justice for wrongdoing reveals the regular alternation of opposing forces as the manifestation of order, according to the ordinance (*taxis*) of time.¹⁴ Simplicius understood

10 In a pre-ontological representation, the distinction between 'things' and ornament is less clear; for example, it is not easy to distinguish tree and tree-ornament in an Assyrian relief.

11 See Plato, *Sophist* 257a–258e on negation and contrariety, in a discussion pursued to clarify the relation between what is and what is not, so as to define the nature of the sophist's falsity; Aristotle *Metaphysics* XIV for a criticism of contraries, numbers and the Platonic definition of being as first principles.

12 *The Rig Veda*, selected and translated by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 25–6.

13 Anaximander's fragment is preserved by Simplicius in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* as a citation by Theophrastus in *Physikōn Doxai* (*Phys. Opin.*), fr. 2 in Diels' *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1879), 476; on the contentious question of whether Theophrastus is quoting Anaximander's words, see G.S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 312. Charles Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 156 notes that Anaximander uses *apokrinesthia*, "separating-off", used of the secretion or ejection of seed, for the division from the "Boundless". See *ibid.*, 168–78 for analysis of the fragment.

14 Kahn discusses the oppositions grouped by the Milesians as hot-cold, then dry-wet, bright-dark and possibly male-female; qualities grouped respectively with the sun and the earth (*ibid.*, 161–62).

these entities as the elements.¹⁵ Empedocles' theory of the action of opposites on one another through the interplay of love and hate, union and division gives another account of nature as a "dynamic interplay between conflicting powers", these opposites typically being the physical elements.¹⁶

Kahn sees Anaximander's fragment as the earliest expression of the new philosophic sense of *kosmos* as used by Parmenides, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Diogenes.¹⁷ Aëtius II.1.1 and Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, VIII.48 recount that Pythagoras first applied the term *kosmos* to the heavens.¹⁸ Kahn stresses that *kosmos* is not just spatial disposition of all things, but "the temporal *taxis* within which opposing powers have their turn by office".¹⁹ This character of *kosmos* as "rhythmically repeated cycle"²⁰ should be recalled when considering attempts to show the connection between ornament in artifice and world order, such as Cicero's discussion of rhythm in *De oratore* III. 45.176–46.181. The philosophical and medical (Hippocratic) accounts of *kosmos* as universal order, created from the dynamic, rhythmic equilibrium of opposing elements in time, suggest the qualities we might read back into artificial ornament: order created from measured, reiterated alternation between

15 Kahn concurs with Simplicius' reading and notes the similarity to medical language in the fragment (ibid., 178–83).

16 Ibid., 133; on the elements as opposites or *enantia* see ibid., 126–33, 159–63. Aristotle and Hippocratic medicine uses this view of the elements.

17 Ibid., 188ff; 219–30. Kahn quotes Jaeger's claim in *Paideia. The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939–44), I, 158–59 that Anaximander represents "the spiritual discovery of the cosmos" and discusses Heraclitus B 30 as the first philosophic use of *kosmos* (ibid., 219, 224–25); see however Kirk, *Heraclitus*, 312–14, who quotes Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.1.11 and Plato, *Gorgias* 507e–508a on *kosmos* for world as a comparatively new use. Amongst early philosophical uses of *kosmos* Kahn lists *De Hebdomadibus* 2.24 whose lost sentence is preserved in the Latin translation "Mundi forma sic omnis ornata est" (*Anaximander*, 224, n. 2). James Miller, *Measures of Wisdom. The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity* (Toronto: Toronto UP 1986), 63, quotes Philo's claim in *The Eternity of the World* 4 that Anaxagoras meant by 'kosmos' the dances and revolutions of the stars.

18 In the same sentence, Diogenes says that Parmenides, according to Theophrastus, or Hesiod according to Zeno used *kosmos* to refer to the roundness of the earth; I am following Kirk's interpretation of the passage, *Heraclitus*, 313, n. 1. Plutarch, *De placitis philosophorum* II.1 and Galen, *Historia philosophiae* 429 ascribed the meaning of *kosmos* as world to Pythagoras. Cf. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 4–22 on the *kosmos* as the strife from which "fairest harmony" arises, quoting Heraclitus B 80 and B 8 (Vlastos, 7).

19 Kahn, *Anaximander*, 188.

20 Ibid., 190.

opposites.²¹ It is also important for subsequent discussion that *kosmos* is conceived in qualitative terms (hot-cold, dry-wet) and its “unifying structure takes the form of a harmonious community of opponents living together under law”.²² According to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.5.6, 986a22–27, the Pythagoreans grouped contrary qualities into a series of binary oppositions which would have momentous consequences: limit-unlimited; odd-even; unity-plurality; right-left; male-female; rest-motion; straight-crooked; light-dark; good-evil; square-oblong.

Kahn’s discussion of *kosmos* does not conceive nature and society as separate, as they would become in the *logos-physis* controversies of the fifth century; terms like *taxis* and justice (*dikē*) are transferred from the social context to describe the elements or the heavens.²³ The continuity of nature and law is later asserted at the opening of Philo’s *On the creation of the cosmos according to Moses* (*De opificio mundi*), the foundational text of hexaemeral literature.²⁴ Kahn suggests that the two senses of *kosmos* in its philosophical use and in the general usage as good ordering or appropriate arrangement and hence finery or elaborate adornment, including poetry, were distinct in classical Greece.²⁵ However, the two senses are certainly played on in later discussions like that of Cicero’s treatment of rhythm in *De oratore* III.45.176–46.181, in Christian accounts of creation, discussed below and in Neoplatonic evocations of providential order.

21 Kahn (ibid.) quotes Diogenes Laertius’ discussion of a cosmology found in “Pythagorean notebooks” by Alexander Polyhistor, regarded variously as contemporary to Plato (Diels) and late fourth century (Festugière).

22 Ibid., 211. The theme continues with the Church Fathers: John Damascene discusses how God makes opposing forces work together; John Chrysostom (*On the Statutes*, Homily 9.6) notes the harmony of opposing elements like land and sea, which do not consume one another. See Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 203, 208. Cf. Philo, *Questions on Genesis* 2.118 on the Logos as binding and weaving together the parts of the universe and their contraries.

23 Kahn, *Anaximander*, 192–93, 211.

24 “the cosmos is in harmony with the law and the man who observes the law is at once a citizen of the cosmos, directing his actions in relation to the rational purpose of nature, in accordance with which the entire cosmos also is administered”, Philo, *On the creation of the cosmos according to Moses*, 3, with translation, introduction and commentary by David Runia (Leiden: Brill, 2001). The Greek title is uncertain; Runia, ibid., 96, discusses Cohn’s choice of *Philōnis peri tēs kata Mōusea kosmopoīias*.

25 Kahn, *Anaximander*, 223, notes that *kosmos* is most frequently associated with the verb *synistēmi*, compose, put together or arrange.

This fundamental marking of contraries and their relation through measure appears as a theme in Plato's *Philebus* 16c, where the formative principles of the Pythagorean universe are given as limit (*peras*, to *peperasmēnon*), i.e. unit, odd or even and the unlimited (*to apeiron*), discussed from 24a as indefinite quantity, as expressed by comparatives (e.g. "hotter, "more").²⁶ Plato thus develops the qualitative oppositions of the Milesians, and the discussion of the unlimited is that of indefinite increase or decrease of quality. Pleasure is assigned to the state of indefinite quality and the dialogue ends with measure discussed as the greatest good.²⁷ Plato postulates a third class of phenomenon, consisting in the mixture of the two, setting limit on variable opposites, thus making them "commensurable [*symmetria*], harmonious [*sympōnē*] and instilling number" (*Philebus* 25d–e 26a); this suggests pattern as the conjunction of contraries through measure.²⁸ The identification of the unlimited with the indefinite increase in quality (e.g. 'more'), identified with pleasure, also prefigures the rhetorical descriptions of ornament as a non-quantitative enhancement or increase. This is exemplified by Quintilian's discussion of ornament as unspecified qualitative comparative which is "*more* than the probable and the perspicuous . . . what makes things *more gleaming*".²⁹

Translating from Plato's intellectual concerns to the figurative context of ornament, we can see two lines of thought; where ornament is related to limit and measure, it can participate in good order. Where it is allied with indefinite increase of qualities, it is associated with pleasure and appearance, as against the 'pure' pleasures offered by 'pure' objects (such as geometric figures) and learning, as discussed in *Philebus*.

Philebus concerns the definition of the good, said to be a proper mixture or compound of thought and properly defined pleasure, whose causal factors are measure (*metron*) and *symmetria*, which are also called the chief of man's possessions. At *Philebus* 64e *metron* and *symmetria* are everywhere identified with beauty and excellence (*aretē*). Plato also remarks in *Statesman* 283e–284b on

26 *Philebus* 24b–e. Discussed in J.J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art. Criticism, History and Terminology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 16. At 16c–d and 23 the division of limited from unlimited is said to be revealed by the gods to men.

27 The dialogue encompasses discussion of perception and the discussion of "true pleasures" occasioned by colours, shapes, sounds or smells which are beautiful in themselves, not relative to something, and by the "imperceptible" pleasures of learning (51a–52a).

28 A further, fourth class of phenomenon consists in the causal factors which bring about precise admixture of the limit and unlimited.

29 *Institutio oratoria* VIII.3.62, trans. H.E. Butler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986): "ornatum est, quod perspicuo ac probabili plus est. Eius primi gradus sunt in eo quod velis concipiendo et exprimendo, tertius, qui haec nitidiora faciat".

measure as an absolute, not relative, value which artworks strive to achieve. If Riegl argued that “symmetry proves to be an immanent postulate of all decorative art, ingrained in human beings since the very beginning of artistic activity”, we should recall that *symmetria* in ancient usage refers to proportion.³⁰ The “immanent urge to adorn” of which Riegl and Brett speak in this understanding has its basis in a making of measure which creates proportion and relation between contraries—fundamentally, limit and the unlimited.³¹ Later in the Platonic tradition, in the third century CE, Plotinus in *Enneads* 1.6.2 spoke of reason as creating pattern, as it brings form to formlessness.³²

We might therefore see the continuity of pattern as depicting, in visual terms, universal conditions of ordering which are prerequisite to appearance. Ornament is however pre-conceptual and therefore cannot serve as a means of knowledge. Its other distinctive feature is its secondary, framing character. This is normally regarded in terms of what finishes or completes but if we consider the creation of order from limit and the unlimited as the primary role of pattern we might see the patterning as a *precondition* of specific figurations. If we regard pattern as forming a frame, we can see the commensurable mixture of limit and limitless as denoting the background or conditions for the appearance of particular forms or narratives. Thus the chorus of the Muses in the opening of Hesiod’s *Theogony* becomes the frame for the rehearsal of the genealogy of the gods. Kahn discusses how the theory of elemental mixture was advanced by Parmenides, Empedocles and Anaxagoras as a substitute for “coming-to-be” and “perishing” in Xenophanes and Heraclitus.³³ The order created by the relating of limit and the limitless concerns the conditions for manifestation and disappearance. The patterned frame which encloses, signalling the completion, perfection and finitude of a thing, carries a reference to universal conditions of ordering which underlie it. Thus what appears by artifice is contained by the measured interplay of oppositions necessary to the appearance of things—and which gives them limit and order. In *Timaeus*, measure or

30 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 47.

31 Ibid., 49; Brett, *Rethinking Decoration*, 6, speaks of an “impulse or natural propensity to decorative activity . . . immanent in our nature without which we would not be complete human beings”.

32 All quotations from Plotinus are from Stephen MacKenna’s translation, ed. John Dillon (London: Penguin, 1991). Plotinus also speaks of crafts which inform matter, such as building, as pattern-giving (v.9.11) and calls beauty pattern-giving (v.9.2). The relation between order and ornament appears in Thomas Taylor’s selected translation of Plotinus (1817), on the virtues (*Enn.* 1.2.1); on the stars as contributing order and ornament to the universe (*Against the Gnostics, Enn.* 11.9.13); on the presence of form in matter (*Enn.* 111.6.11).

33 Kahn, *Anaximander*, 154–55.

rather commensurability between the limited and unlimited reappears in the (Pythagorean) account of the creation of the world soul from the opposites of being and becoming by means of harmonic intervals. From the harmonic constitution of the world soul comes the world as *kosmos*, the “fairest of all that has become”.³⁴ Ornament however remains by its nature semi-articulate; unlike the harmonic intervals of *Timaeus* it embodies measure in a visual figure and cannot be abstracted from its metaphoric, concrete character.³⁵

Ornament is not a narrative or ‘subject’ but shows form selected from the limitlessness of potentiality, to bring measure to the unformed by its rhythmic alternations. Its frequent use of vegetal motifs alludes to the continuity of generation and growth (*physis*), its geometry to the rationality of proportion. It creates a space in which form can appear—and—importantly—it implies the rationality of form. This is a significant point; where form is not viewed as rational but as appearance, we find that ornament is associated with fantasy. As we shall see in the following chapters, this appears in the long association of ornament and sophistry.

Ornament in the sense of pattern might therefore be termed ‘pre-metaphysical’ or ‘pre-dialectical’ ordering, where dialectic is understood in Platonic terms, rather than in the Aristotelian definition of reasoning concerning probability.³⁶ Plotinus in *Enneads* I.3.1–2 groups the metaphysician, the musician and the born lover as those who will attain the journey to the Good; the metaphysician, most exalted of the three, does so by dialectic, while the lover must be led from the contemplation of embodied beauty everywhere to the beauty of arts, sciences and virtues and thence to the “One principle underlying all”.³⁷ The musician longs for “measure and shapely pattern” and must be led from “tone, rhythm and design in the things of sense” to the harmony of the Intellectual world; what dialectic performs at the level of abstract thought is pre-figured in the harmony and beauty of pattern-making. To the extent that pattern shares the theme of division, opposition, and relation of contraries

34 See *Timaeus* 40a where Plato says the sphere of the fixed stars shows “ornament/ order in the true sense” (*kosmos alethinós*); cf. pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* 987b6–7; 982d–e; Alcinoüs *Didaskalikos* 14.6, mod.edn. *Handbook of Platonism*, translated with commentary and introduction by John Dillon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 128.

35 Cf. Gombrich, *Sense of Order*, 75, on filling and framing as fundamental to ornamental design.

36 On dialectic as reasoning concerning the probable, and its relation to rhetoric, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I.1–2, 1354a–1356a. For a distinction of Platonic dialectic which deals with verities from Stoic and Aristotelian logic, “the coil of premises and conclusions”, see Plotinus, *Enneads* I.3.4–I.3.5.

37 Following the ascent of the lover in *Symposium* 210–211d.

through measure with discussions of order, form and the monad-dyad relation in early philosophy, it might even be regarded as an archaic, metaphoric precursor of those philosophic concerns. Ornament participates in the rational insofar as it embodies order and measure (thus Plotinus refers to pattern made by reason) but it is pre-discursive and hence pre-conceptual as well as pre-narrative. Thus it cannot attain the movement, development and resolution which characterises dialectical thought. Ornament is at best a starting point for contemplation, but not an end in itself. This lack of conceptual abstraction means that is not a means by which thought may be pursued, as Plato notes in *Republic* 529b–e when he says that the ornament of the heavens may inspire us to astronomy but contemplation of a phenomenon cannot in itself provide us with scientific knowledge. A similar point is made more positively in *Timaeus* 47a7–b2 where contemplation of the revolutions of the heavens fills man with desire for philosophy.³⁸ This passage on the “greatest good of eyesight” signals the link between the contemplation of the beauty of the world and intellectual ascent which reappears in hexaemeral literature.

To summarise, framing pattern exists in relation to something, creating a context or prerequisite for the arising of appearance or revealing the continuity of order through the mixture of limit and unlimited. These profound primary processes are embedded in their figurative manifestation, as pattern or dance.

Dance

Dance and its cosmic character in ancient poetry and philosophy, most exploited in the Platonic tradition, reminds us how ornament appeared as order and as framing pattern.³⁹ The term *daidalos*, used already in Homer of curiously wrought designs on the Shield of Achilles (*Iliad* XVIII.482) refers to the mythical architect of the Labyrinth, whose windings were imitated

38 Cf. Philo *On the creation of the cosmos* 54, where contemplation of the “concordant choral dances” of the stars fills the soul with desire for knowledge and so gives rise to the pursuit of philosophy. Runia notes Philo’s dependence on *Tim.* 47a7–b2 here. On philosophy arising from contemplation of the heavenly bodies cf. pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* 986c5–d4.

39 Miller, *Measures*, 35–36, quotes the anonymous scholiast on Euripides’ *Hecuba* which describes the symbolism of the movements left, right and stationary at the strophe, antistrophe and epode as signifying the movement of the heavens, the planets and the immobility of the earth. Miller’s study is rich but his references must be treated with caution. It is worth recalling Semper’s association of architecture with dance and music as “cosmic” arts in the introduction to “Theorie des Formell-Schönen”, in Hermann ed., *Gottfried Semper*, 219–44; Semper opens by invoking the dual meaning of *kosmos* in relation to “tectonics”.

in a serpentine dance—also described in dance on the Shield of Achilles (Il. XVIII.590–606).⁴⁰ Stars and plants are said to dance, in the creation of the stars in Plato's *Timaeus* 40a–d and in the allegories for seasonal regeneration, the Hōrai and the Graces.⁴¹ Dance persists in ontological speculation to the very end of the Platonic academy, as Simplicius reports that Damacius, head of the Athenian Academy at its dispersion in 529, spoke of Becoming as a spiraling or unwinding from Being, as the choral dance around Being is an unwinding of the permanence around Being.⁴² Dance manifests the cosmic order which creates temporality (stars, seasons). It is within this framework of time created by order that becoming appears from the infinity of Being.

The circling dance of the Muses in Hesiod (*Theogony* 1–21) hymns the praises of the Olympian gods and the Muses according to Pindar fr. 31 were created to sing Zeus' praise. Here we see an important theme: ornament as illumination of praise. The praise of the creator and creation is an enduring theme in

40 Cf. Lucretius' description of the earth giving forth flowers as *daedala tellus* in the invocation of Venus at *De rerum natura* 1.7. The image of a ring of dancers holding hands on the top, framing band of the François Vase (Florence, Museo Archeologico) has been seen as an image of the "Geranos"—the dance performed after escape from the Labyrinth or of the Daedalian chorus built for Ariadne on Crete; see Miller, *Measures*, 27.

41 See *ibid.*, 45–49, on Pre-Socratic fragments, including those which speak of the chorus of the stars, although the phrasing may be that of the doxographer, echoing *Timaeus*; cf. the parody of dance themes in materialist cosmology in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. The "frenzied" dance of stars appears in Sophocles' *Antigone* 1146–51 where Dionysus is invoked by the chorus as "choragus of the fire-breathing stars" cf. *Ion* 1074–89 and the cosmic dance in Euripides *Bacchae* 105–19 (Miller, *Measures*, 31–33). Philo alludes repeatedly to the choral dance of the stars (*On the creation* 54, 78, 126, discussed below; *The Special Laws* 1.6.34, 111.187–8; *The Eternity of the World* 4; *On the Migration of Abraham* 181; *On Mating* 51; *On the Change of Names* 72–3; *On Rewards and Punishments* 121; *On the Virtues* 74), see Miller, *Measures*, 56–80. Plotinus, *Enneads* 11.9.7; IV.4.33 uses the allegory of the chorus or pantomimic dancer for the universal Living Being. Amongst the many allusions to the dance of the Hōrai and the Graces to the hymn of the Muses and the music of Apollo, see *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, ll. 188–99; *Orphic Hymns* 34, to Apollo, on the sun as source of the alternate dance of the seasons and 42 to the Hōrai; Julian, *Hymn to King Helios* 146d on the dance of the Graces as an astronomical figure; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 2.34 on the dance of the Hōrai; Libanius, *Oration* 11.29; Synesius, *Hymns* I.334–5, on the choruses of mother nature. Miller, *Measures*, 31, notes the original meaning of *harmonizein*, to fit or join.

42 Simplicius, *In Physicorum libros* ed. Diels (Berlin: Reimer, 1882), 775, 28–34, quoted Miller, *Measures*, 489, and discussed in the context of Proclus' theology. Miller's reading of Neoplatonism is centred on the development of the image of the chorus around the One, from Plotinus to Proclus.

interpretation of *Timaeus*, in later Platonism and Hermetic writings, as in Philo who parallels the making of Paradise and the chorus of the Muses.⁴³ It is also a point where the ‘cosmic’ conception of ornament touches its epideictic use in rhetoric. Hesiod’s Muses dance around a fountain and altar—images of mysterious forces of inspiration, of the emergence of life from chthonic hiddenness, and of divinity. This association of disclosure with the Muses will persist into the Renaissance, as in Scaliger’s remark that the poets disclosed what the Muses hid from other men.⁴⁴ The circling, choric dance of the Muses in Hesiod also forms the framework for the unfolding of the genealogy, the becoming of the gods. *Timaeus* 47d–e describes harmony and rhythm as gifts given by the Muses to restore order and concord, measure and grace to the soul. Plato’s *Laws* 653d–654a concerns the same theme, with the song and dance of the chorus as means for men to be restored to wholeness and relation to the gods; at 672e *choreia* as a whole is identified with *paideia* as a whole. Proclus in his commentary on *Republic* 1.180.17–23 said the Muses “fill all creations of the Father both visible and invisible with harmony and rhythmic motions.”⁴⁵ Thus one meaning of dance is as manifestation of cosmic order, exemplified by the heavens and restored amongst humankind through the study of the arts. The notion of harmony as a filling of all intervals provides an attractive analogy with the exploration or elaboration of division in visual ornament, especially in geometric motifs. We shall see that *exornatio mundi* as a filling of the world with species also holds this idea of the exploration of differentiation until all possibilities of distinction have been filled.

Cicero remarks on the derivation of *corona* from *choros*, thus implying the association between encircling and the praise or splendour of the garland or crown, an association already present in the chorus of the Hesiodic Muses who hymn the praises of the gods.⁴⁶ The identification of chorus and *corona*

43 Philo, *Questions in Genesis* 1.6; in *De plantatione* 126–31 he speaks of the Muses as hymning creation; see further discussion of Philo in the *exornatio mundi* section.

44 “hi autem Poetae, quare soli sibi Musarum tutelam vindicant atque patrocinium, quarum spiritu, quae alios lateant, ab ipsis inveniantur”, J.C. Scaliger, *Poetices* 1.2, (Lyon: Antonius Vicentius, 1561), 3.

45 Miller, *Measures*, 473. For the identification of the Muses with the celestial Sirens of the Myth of Er, see Plutarch, *De animae procreatione* 1029c–d, discussed Miller, *Measures*, 248–52.

46 Cicero, *Orator* 48.160 remarks that the correct aspirate pronunciation (*chorona*) had shifted to *corona* due to the “judgement of the ear”. *Choros* is associated by Hesychius with the circle (*kyklos*) or garland (*stephanos*), see Liddell and Scott, *Greek English Lexicon* s.v. *choros* 111; from the derivative *choronos* comes the Latin *chorona* for *corona*, so that it

is central to Isidore's discussion of *ornamenta* in *Etymologiae* XIX.30.⁴⁷ Such associations persist into medieval philosophical allegory, in the *De planctu naturae* of Alan of Lille, where the chorus of the planets is represented in a *chorea* of gems on the crown of Nature.⁴⁸

Creation, Form and Matter

The processes described above concern the first stages by which things come to appearance. The arrangement of all things that arises through division, separation and then harmonious ordering is exemplified by the creation of the cosmos, where all things that are come into being.

Timaeus, the prototype for subsequent accounts of cosmic ordering, relates two accounts of creation; creation through reason, with number as a structure which relates being and becoming, and creation "according to necessity" from 47e ff. In this second account appears the *chōra*, the intermediary between being and becoming which is the mysterious place of becoming, whose dim and baffling nature is repeatedly emphasised. Plato does not assign a clear identity to the *chōra*, calling it "nurse" and "receptacle" (49a), or as "mother" speaking of it as a material substrate for elements or opposing terms, and as a place, which provides a means of individuation for things (52b). He underlines that it in "some most perplexing and baffling way" partakes in the intelligible, and is apprehensible by a "kind of bastard reasoning", yet says that in its "phantom flight" from thing to thing it is almost nothing at all. The *chōra* is a third term between reason (which contemplates invisible and ungenerated forms) and opinion (which apprehends generated objects perceptible by sense): its dimly described nature is rendered through the metaphors of nurse,

is related to *korōnos*, referring to anything bent or curved (source of Latin *curvus*, *cornu* and *corvus*).

47 Isidore, *Etymologarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), II, XIX.30.1–3, "De ornamentis": "Prima ornamenta corona insigne victoriae, sive regis honoris signum; quae ideo in capite regum ponitur, ad significandum circumfusus in orbe populos, quibus adinctus quasi caput suum coronatur... Nomen coronae hac ex causa vocatum, eo quod initio circum aras curreretur, atque ad imaginem circuitus vel chori et formatum et nominatum coronam". Dionysus is said to have first worn a crown (in keeping with his role as 'inventor' of triumph), which Isidore interprets as the head 'conquered' by wine.

48 *De planctu naturae*, II, Prose 1, ll. 40–137, ed. Nikolaus Häring, *Studi medievali* 19 (1978), 797–879.

receptacle, mother and winnowing fan, in description of the movement and transformation of forms and elements.

Plato's account of the *chōra* is generally viewed as an account of material substrate, but the ways he discusses it—the sub-rational conception through metaphor, the place where opposing things come to appearance, the implied rhythmic character of its movements—have affinities with the 'pre-metaphysical' role of ornament as pattern and frame, creating a place where things can come to appearance.⁴⁹ Gadamer's remark that the discussion of *chōra* requires us to think about space by thinking about what shows up in it, which appears as a copy or image, brings us close to the conception of ornament as frame we have outlined.⁵⁰ As he notes, the *chōra*'s ordering or "shaking-up" of the elements is a pre-ordering to the disposition through form and number by the demiurge, who makes everything as beautiful and good as possible.⁵¹ This secondary ordering, following the separation of the elements, will become in Christian exegesis the *exornatio mundi*. If we might cautiously point to the similarity of the *chōra* to the framing, patterning character of ornament, in Christian cosmology ornamentation becomes linked to the secondary stages of creation. Between the cosmology of *Timaeus* and Christian hexaemeral commentary comes the development of a form-matter metaphysics, where matter is identified with the 'unlimited' or 'unformed'.⁵²

49 See A.E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 311–58; Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*; F.M. Cornforth, *Plato's Cosmology* (London: Kegan Paul and Trubner, 1937), 177–88, 191–210; H.G. Gadamer *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato* trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 172–89. Carl, "Ornament and Time", 61, n. 110 associates the *chōra* with "the conditions for cosmogony". Brett, *Rethinking Decoration*, 96–99 mentions the *chōra*, but uses Julia Kristeva's semiotic appropriation of the term.

50 *Dialogue*, 175, where Gadamer also comments "the image must be *in* something and made *out of* something other than that of which it is an image. Otherwise it cannot be a picture or an image at all". He notes Cornforth's citation of Gorgias, *On Not-being* frag. 3 on the one that becomes two, place and body (*Plato's Cosmology* 195).

51 Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic*, 176; Gadamer's argument is that the rational structure of space is disclosed by work of "Necessity", and here again we might recall the geometric nature of early ornament.

52 Hugh King, "Aristotle without *prima materia*", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17, 3 (1956), 370–89, argued that the concept of prime matter was created by the commentary tradition and the Scholastics, suggesting that Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle, such as Simplicius, identified the *chōra* with matter (*hylē*), despite Aristotle's rejection of the Platonic account of the *chōra*. This rejection appears in *Physics* I.9, 191b35–192a34 on disagreement with the same conception of matter to indicate material substrate and privation; *Physics* IV.3, 209b34–210a1 on Plato's failure to say why forms and numbers have no

The shift from a dialectics of limit and unlimited to a metaphysics of form and matter has consequences for our arguments about ornament. This shift forms part of a critical reflection on the pre-Socratic notion that the principles of things are sets of contrary qualities. Aristotle is the major voice in this critique, but it appears in Plato's *Sophist* 242c ff. and preoccupies Plotinus in *Enneads* I.8.6–7, although at II.3.16 he recognises the presence of contrariety in created things: “without opposites there could be no ordered universe: all living-beings of the partial realm include contraries”.⁵³ For Plotinus the descent from unity into difference and contrariety means that particulars will seek a “warmer desire for unification”, “a closer intention towards fullness of life” (*Enneads* III.2.17). In order to stress the necessary presence of contraries, Plotinus returns to a series of metaphors for unity in multiplicity, or unity through opposites, notably theatre and dance, where “opposing steps” form a whole (III.2.16). Unlike the Aristotelian view of matter as a principle, Plotinus regards it as privation or a necessary source of contrariety.

In *Metaphysics* XIV.4, 1091b31 ff., in criticism of the conceptions of contraries as principles or elements in previous thinkers, Aristotle notes the identification of plurality or inequality with the bad; he substitutes the conception of contrary principles with the potentiality-actuality, matter-form dyad.⁵⁴ Matter—as an ontological principle, rather than as a determinate material—accounts for what persists in the course of change when one contrariety is replaced by another, like cold by heat. The movement between contraries is for Aristotle located in substances, composed of form and matter, and the tension between contraries is viewed in terms of change, in the actualisation (*energeia*) of form

place; *De generatione et corruptione* 2.1, 329a13–23 on lack of clarity about the existence of the recipient apart from the elements, said to be solids. Friedrich Solmsen, “Aristotle and Prime Matter: A Reply to Hugh R. King”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19, 2, (1958), 243–52, notes that Aristotle's material substratum is “never found in separation from contraries” (ibid., 249); he distinguishes Aristotle's theory of substantial change from the view of mixture from Empedocles to Plato as an aggregate of bodies or parts (ibid., 251). The discussions in Calcidius' *Commentary on Timaeus* para. 308 and *Enneads* III.6.12–13 show *chōra* understood to refer to matter; Plotinus replaces Plato's metaphors of receptacle and nurse with that of the mirror to describe matter's relationship to form.

53 At I.8.6 Plotinus discusses levels at which contrariety can be understood; in the relation between members of a species or genus, which share a common quality, and at the level of essence.

54 Cf. *Enneads* I.8.8 on the matter setting its shapelessness, excess and defect against the form when form enters it.

in the potentiality (*dynamis*) of matter.⁵⁵ In *De generatione et corruptione* II.1, 329a25–27 he says succinctly that matter is accompanied by contrariety and from this the so-called elements come into being.⁵⁶ The relation between contraries is not conceived as a patterning or ordering, but regarded in terms of change within substances. The proportioning of limit and unlimited is not just a primary relation which provides a context for other things to appear, but becomes the dyad of form and matter instantiated in each existing thing. Thus views of ornament which work with Aristotelian terms, such as *energeia*, will have profoundly different implications from those based in notions of *kosmos*. This is a point we will revisit in the coming arguments.

The other point about the postulation of matter as principle of indeterminacy is the way that it takes on moral values. This is apparent already in *Philebus*, with its identification of the unlimited, conceived as indefinite quantity, with sensuous pleasure. The Pythagorean schema cited by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* I.5.6, 986a likewise aligns the unlimited with evil, darkness, plurality and female, amongst other qualities; in *Metaphysics* XIV.4.10–12, 1091b31–1092a6 he reiterates the association of plurality with the bad. Aristotle's view of matter aligned it with the female, but regarded its potentiality as a tendency to form and actualisation.⁵⁷

The more negative conception of matter as evil or privation appears subsequently, discussed repeatedly by Plotinus, as at *Enneads* I.8; II.4; at I.8.8. he concludes “the Measureless is evil primarily”.⁵⁸ The more emphatically matter

55 *Metaphysics* IX.3.9 on *energeia* as movement; IX.6–10 on *energeia*; IX.1–5 on *dynamis*; VII.3–4 on matter and substance Cf. Plotinus III.6.2, “where act means suffering change, there is Matter”.

56 The question is discussed also in *Physics* I.6, 189a–189b on the number of principles it is necessary to posit and I.7, the important discussion of matter as principle.

57 Aristotle compared matter's tendency to form to the yearning of the female, or ugly, for the male or beautiful, insisting that the ‘ugliness’ or ‘femaleness’ of the desire are to be regarded as accidental qualities (*Physics* I.9, 192a22–25). The analogy is repeated by Calcidius in his commentary on *Timaeus*, *In Tim.*, para. 286–87. Contrast *Enneads* III.6.19 where the identification of matter and mother is rejected on the grounds that the begetting power is incompatible with matter's utter passivity.

58 See I.8.3 for discussion of the relation of “unmeasure” and “undetermination” as evil, where it is postulated as a “place below all the patterns, forms shapes, measurements, and limits”; at I.8.4 the soul which accepts evil accepts “unmeasured, excess, shortcoming”. The soul which breaks with its source in the Intellectual Principle is stripped of Determination. At I.8.5 essential evil is identified with matter; the tractate however ends with the insistence that to deny evil a place amongst realities is to do away with good as well (I.8.15), a point reaffirmed at II.3.18. The indeterminate character of matter is discussed again at II.4.10 and III.3.6 where matter is the contrary of shape.

is identified with privation, imperfection and evil, the more agonistic the relation between form and matter is seen to be. This is exemplified by later topoi of Michelangelo's sculptures as forms whose stirring life within their matter dramatises the process of actualisation of form, in criticism practised by figures such as Vasari and Varchi who blended Platonism with Aristotelian art criticism.⁵⁹

An example of Neoplatonic Homeric allegory which works with the form-matter dyad is found in Plotinus' disciple Porphyry, who uses the theme of the world as *kosmos* in his commentary on the Homeric Cave of the Nymphs (*Odyssey* XIII.96–112). After demonstrating that the details of the passage make no sense read literally, Porphyry takes the cave as an allegory for *kosmos*, beautiful due to the presence of form, dark due to matter (the waters of the cave are read as symbol for generation).⁶⁰ The cosmic cave then becomes the basis for discussion of the ascent and descent of the soul; Macrobius expanded the descent of the soul through the heavens in *De antro nymphaeum* 12 in his account of the soul's faculties derived from the planets, assigned to the Muses who replace the celestial Sirens as movers of the spheres (*In somnium Scipionis* I.12.3, II.3).⁶¹ Porphyry uses the form-matter opposition as a contrary, with the world as order-ornament viewed as wrought from contraries; there is no progress from primary division of contraries to variation of species, partly because there is no issue about the origin of matter.

Exornatio mundi

Evocations of the earth 'adorned' with species appear in the Platonic and Stoic traditions; in the prosopopoeia of *Enneads* III.2.3 Cosmos describes itself, speaking of sea, air, the "eternal orderly circuit of the heavens" and the "earth ornate with all its growths and living things of every race".⁶² At *Enn.* III.2.13 the beauty of the world is extolled in

59 See Chapter 7.

60 Porphyry, *De antro nymphaeum* 2.

61 Assignment of the Muses to the planets appears in Plutarch, *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* 1029d and *Moralia* 745a–b; 746a–47a.

62 *Enneads* III.2–3 constitute a treatise on providence. *Ennead* III.2.11 discusses the necessary variety and inequality in the universe, using the analogies of colours in a painting, citizens in a city or actors in a play. Prior to Plotinus, Maximus of Tyre, *Orations* 15.6, blends the Platonic image of god who creates harmony, the Pythagorean Apollo who tunes his instrument and the Stoic cosmocrator who turns the crowd into a chorus. See

the varied workmanship of wonder in any and every animal form . . . the grace of fruits and even leaves, the lavishness, delicacy, the diversity of every exquisite bloom . . . not issuing once, and then to die out, but made ever and ever anew as the Transcendent Beings move variously over this earth.

Amongst the most striking of these metaphoric illustrations is the tree as figure for the whole at *Enneads* III.3.7, where the All is likened to the root, which never emerges and exists in unbroken rest, from which multiplicity proceeds, branching into the innumerable manifestations of production in the world, in ceaseless growth but carrying within themselves the trace of their common source. The metaphor, where generated being is figured by bough, leaf and fruit, is consonant with plant life as exemplar of *exornatio mundi*. Philo in *De Plantatione* II.1 similarly speaks of the world as a plant containing all plants within itself, like shoots from one root.

The discussions in *Philebus* of the cause of the mixture and of the demiurge of *Timaeus* attest the presence of a maker, a third principle, codified in the second century *Didaskalikos* or *Handbook of Platonism* IX.2 of Alcinous or Albinus as God, matter and Idea.⁶³ John Dillon notes that the origins of the God-Forms-Matter triad are obscure and suggests that it appeared in response to Aristotle's criticisms that monad-dyad models ignored the efficient cause.⁶⁴ Dillon suggests that the scheme may have been influenced by the Stoic triad of God-Logos-Matter, traced to Varro's teacher, Antiochus of Ascalon; Augustine in *City of God* VII.8 records that Varro allegorised Jupiter, Minerva and Juno as God, Idea and Matter.⁶⁵ This tripartite scheme gives a teleological emphasis to the creation of order and pattern as opposed to the dyadic relation between determinate and indeterminate. Accounts of divine creation as the exemplary

Maximus, *The Philosophical Orations*, trans. M.B. Trapp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Miller, *Measures*, 255–56.

63 To the demiurge and the cause of the mixture could be added the Good of *Republic* and the One of *Parmenides*. See Alcinous, *Handbook*, 93. Alcinous specifies that Platonists do not accept Forms of artificial objects, things contrary to nature (e.g. illnesses), of individuals, of trivial things such as dirt or of relations. For commentary, see *Handbook*, 96–98; Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 53–55, who notes controversy over the authorship of Alcinous or Albinus. The *Handbook* long circulated as an introduction to Platonic philosophy, translated by Ficino and printed by Aldus.

64 Dillon, *Handbook*, 93–94.

65 Ibid. Dillon notes that Augustine in *City of God* VII.28 ascribes to Varro the notion of the Forms as the thoughts of God—a concept which appears in *Handbook* 9 and which Dillon sees as existing with Xenocrates' systemisation of Platonic doctrine (ibid., 67).

case of ordering are concerned with its perfection and continuity, from which the divinity of the maker is known. Here the visibility and universality of order is celebrated, rather than the framing role of pattern with its semi-articulate figurations of ever-present conditions. When Plutarch recalls the terms of *Philebus*, using measure (*metron*) to describe how form acts on matter, he is discussing how God reduces nature to cosmos through number, measure and proportion (*logos*).⁶⁶

Stoic accounts of nature, with their exaltation of universal rational ordering were developed by Panaetius and his pupil Posidonius; their most substantial surviving fragment appears in the portrait of Stoicism in *De natura deorum* by Posidonius' pupil Cicero.⁶⁷ Cicero is a constant point of reference for any discussion of ornament in pre-modern culture, due the range of discussions which he bequeaths to later ages, which go beyond his formulations on *elocutio*. His central concern lies in the continuity between the rationality and harmony of the cosmos and the presence of similar qualities in artifice—in particular, speech. The centrality of humankind in Stoic discussions of universal ordering prompts reflections on the world in its variety as laid out for human use and even enhancement by means of art. Nature, like art, works with an ideal of perfect artifice, but on a far greater scale.⁶⁸ Not only is the world harmonious, but everything in it is created for something else (*De nat. deor.* 11.14.37–39), an idea attributed by Cicero's Stoic speaker, Balbus, to Chrysippus. Here the world is ornament not only in its beauty and wholeness, but in the sense that everything in it is fitting to serve or equip human purposes.

The celebration of nature in *De natura deorum* leads through a hierarchy of creation, with interconnections and affinities throughout, culminating in humans, for whom all other things are produced, and who are in turn produced to contemplate the divine. Our erect posture shows how we were elevated to

66 *Quaestiones conviviales* VIII.2.72ob, cited in Dillon, *Handbook*, 95. Cf. Wisdom 11:21 on God's creation by number, measure and weight.

67 For Stoic views of nature, see Glacken, *Traces*, 51–61, based on Max Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1948), 1.191–209; Pohlenz, “Panaitios”, *PW* 18.3, col. 421–40; Karl Reinhardt “Posidonios von Apameia”, *PW*, 22.1, cols 558–826. Glacken, *Traces*, 53, discusses Posidonius' acceptance of astrology as the cause of universal harmony, so that “all parts of the cosmos are bound together by sympathy”. On *De natura deorum*, see the commentary of A.S. Pease (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958). Karel Svoboda, *L'Esthétique de Saint Augustin et ses sources* (Brno: Brno University Press, 1933) regards Posidonius as a major influence on Augustine, through the intermediaries of Varro and Cicero.

68 See *De nat. deor.* 11.13.35 on the analogy between nature's progress to achieve her ends and that of arts like painting or architecture.

contemplate the gods—not only inhabitants of the earth but spectators of higher, heavenly beings, as no other animals are.⁶⁹ For Plato, Aristotle and Cicero the heavens are celebrated as an object of delightful contemplation.⁷⁰ Cicero affirms that the world in its complexity has been created for rational beings, gods and humans (*De nat. deor.* 11.53.133).⁷¹ The world is ordained by providence or prudence, the world-mind, in its optimum structure for survival, completeness, consummate beauty and ornament of every kind (*De nat. deor.* 11.22.58). In a similar Stoic vein, Strabo in *Geography* 17.1.36 speaks of Providence as an embroiderer (*poikiltria*) and artificer (*dēmiourgos*) of countless works. Like later Christian writers on the creation, Strabo distinguishes the formation of the earth and its separation from water (what he calls the work of nature) from the demiurgic, ‘embroidering’ work of providence which creates living beings. By the time that hexaemeral literature flourishes, the rhetorical conception of ornament as an embellishment of surface was also well established.

The world is a spectacle for rational contemplation, but also for use—and improvement. The ultimately materialistic nature of Stoic cosmology did not posit an order of transcendent forms and thus was freer to develop notions of the continuities between natural and human design, with both working along rational principles.⁷² The diversity of species and the idea of animals equipped for their life go together, as do the world as habitat and as place of improvement. Thus in *De nat. deor.* 11.39.98–99 the evocation of the variety of species on earth culminates in the praise of humankind as its cultivator, who improves it through interventions and city building.

The human reason and its prime instrument, the hand, have been bestowed so that the earth can be improved and shaped to human purposes, creating almost a second nature (*De nat. deor.* 11.60.150–52).⁷³ A notable rehearsal of this theme appears in the discussion of genius, in ‘Longinus’ *On the sublime* 35.2–5. He writes that nature gathered us together as at a great gathering (panegyric), called us into life and into the whole universe to be spectators of all

69 11.56.140; cf. 11.62.155 on the “spectaculum” of the heavens.

70 Aristotle, *On Philosophy* fr. 12b, quoted by Cicero in *De nat. deor.* 11.37.95; Plato, *Timaeus* 40a6.

71 Cf. *De nat. deor.* 11.62.154 where the world created for gods and humans is the home and city of both; see Glacken, *Traces*, 57.

72 See *De nat. deor.* 11.31.78–79 on the gods’ government of the world as a universal republic or city, “unum mundum et communem rem publicam atque urbem” and on the same reason, truth and law which exists for gods and humans. At 11.34.87–88 the analogy between art and nature returns, on the basis of the rationality they share.

73 “nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur”.

creation and competitors for honour; nature also inspired us with passion for what is great and more divine (*daimoniōterou*) than ourselves. Human contemplation and thought are not satisfied by the whole universe and our ideas pass beyond the limits which encircle us; we look at life from all sides, seeing how the vast, great and beautiful stand supreme and realise the object of our creation. Thus by nature we admire the great and the unusual (*paradoxon*) claims our wonder. The passage anticipates the awe which becomes a part of aesthetic affect in the Renaissance literature of art; it underlines the presence of theatre in the self-conscious act of spectation.

This Stoic conception of the world as created for human use and the evocation of the creatures of each element appear in hexaemeral commentary, concerning the creation in Genesis.⁷⁴ In this literature, the ‘adorning’ of the world (*ornatus mundi* or *exornatio mundi*) is distinguished from the primary acts of the first and second days of creation: the creation of light, division of light from darkness, day from night, and the division of the waters and creation of heaven on (Genesis 1:1–8). The *exornatio mundi* comes on the third to sixth days of creation and concerns the replenishing of each element with its proper species. Ornament here slips from the primary patterning of contraries to a secondary role of replenishment, reflecting the Christian concerns to differentiate the *creatio ex nihilo* of God, who creates matter, from the demiurgic activity of *Timaeus*, which concerns the making of the world from pre-existent elements.⁷⁵

74 See Frank Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1912), with an index of hexaemeral writings; Glacken, *Traces*; Edward Grant, *Science and Religion 400 BC–1500 AD: From Aristotle to Copernicus* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 114–35; Konrad Kretschmer, *Die physische Erdkunde im christlichen Mittelalter: Versuch einer quellenmässigen Darstellung ihrer historischen Entwicklung* (Vienna: Eduard Hölzel, 1889). Beyond the works discussed here, other hexaemeral commentaries include Bede *Libri Quatuor in Genesim*, CCL 118a, 11.1, 1.1.11–26; Rabanus Maurus, *Comm. in Genesim*, PL 107, 439; Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, PG 88, 51–476; see also Alexander Neckham, *De naturis rerum*, ed. T. Wright, RS 34 (London: Longman, 1863); Isidore, *Quaest. In Genesim* PL 83, 207 ff. The tradition of hexaemeral literature ends with Du Bartas’ *Première semaine*; Tasso’s *Le sette giornate*; Milton, *Paradise Lost* VII and the first chapters of Ralegh’s *History of the World*.

75 The earliest reference to *creatio ex nihilo* is given as 2 Maccabees 7:28, although it occurs outside an ontological discussion. For selected treatments in hexaemeral literature of pre-existent matter and *creatio ex nihilo*, see Basil, *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* 11.2; Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 1.7, 11.1; Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram*; idem., *De vera religione* 18.35–6; Gerhard May, *Creatio ex nihilo: the Doctrine of “Creation out of Nothing” in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A.A. Worrall (London: Continuum International, 2004). See *ibid.*, 151, on Tatian (c. 120–180 CE) as the first Christian theologian known to have advanced God’s

At the beginning of this tradition, Philo in *On the creation* 78 speaks of God creating the world for man as a banquet (*symposion*), whose fruits give sustenance and a “most sacred spectacle” (*theatron hierōtaton*).⁷⁶ The soul which contemplates the “concordant choral dances” of the heavenly bodies is said to “feast on a succession of spectacles” (54). In language reminiscent of *Timaeus*, Philo talks of the spectacle of heavens “circling with most wondrous movements, in an order fitly determined always in accordance with the proportion of numbers and harmony of revolutions” (78).⁷⁷ Philo calls the cosmos created for humankind a banquet and a theatre to emphasise that it both serves needs and provides a vision for contemplation. Philo likened the plantation of Paradise to the chorus of the Muses, formed to praise the creator and his works; this is also the institution of theoretic life, since without wisdom the creator cannot be praised.⁷⁸ Admiration of the cosmos, praise of it and thanksgiving to God come together.

The theme of contemplation of the ‘spectacle’ of the cosmos as a kind of theoretic life appears repeatedly through the later Platonic tradition. Iamblichus in *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* 58 attributes to Pythagoras the metaphor of the festivals for the three types of life like those of *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.5.⁷⁹ The three classes of men who come to the festival assemblies (traders, com-

creation of matter. For Philo and *creatio ex nihilo*, see *On the creation* 29, comm. Runia 42, 172–73; idem, *Philo of Alexandria*, 287–90, for refutation of Wolfson’s claim that Philo refers to *creatio ex nihilo*; May, *Creatio*, 9–21, rejects *creatio ex nihilo* in Philo. Philo, *Prov.* 1.22, speaks of God turning unadorned matter to the cosmos with its adornment; the passage however survives only in Armenian and the translation is difficult. See Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*, 120, 141–48, on Philo’s use of paired qualities to describe the movement from disorder to order and the *taxis* and *ataxia* distinction in *Timaeus* 30a.

76 Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 376a calls the contemplation of the divine a “feast upon that sacred vision”, *Complete Works*, translated Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 198. Miller, *Measures*, 63, notes Philo’s definition of *kosmos* to designate the “system of the heavens and the stars including the earth and plants and animals on it” (*The Eternity of the World* 2.4).

77 Cf. *On the creation*, 54 and Runia’s commentary. Runia notes “in Philo’s view, the structure and subject matter of the *Timaeus* illuminate Moses’ intentions in the composition of the Pentateuch” (*Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus*, 87).

78 Philo, *Questions in Genesis* 1.6; *De plantatione* 126–31, discussed in Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus*, 115–18. Runia notes the parallel with Plutarch, *Moralia* 1014a–b on Plato “telling and singing” the praise of the cosmos. Philo’s use of Hesiod is obvious.

79 Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, translated John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, (Atlanta, GA: Scholar’s Press, 1991), 82–83. On spectators and actors in festival an allegory for life, see Miller, *Measures*, 171–73, 180 on Bion of Borysthenes, a follower of Diogenes of the 3rd century BCE, on life as festival, athletic contest, or drama in which man acts.

petitors and spectators) correspond to the life of pleasure, active life and the theoretic life of contemplation.⁸⁰ Plotinus uses the allegory of the pantomimic dancer for the action of the universal living being (IV.4.33) and an extended theatre-of-life metaphor in *Enneads* III.2.11, 15–18, in contemplation of the unequal lots and unforeseeable circumstances of human fortune.

The *exornatio mundi* in hexaemeral literature required careful explanation of the sequential character of creation, since it would have been possible for God to create all things simultaneously, as in Ecclesiastes 18:1 “He that lives forever created all things together”. Basil (*Homilies on the Hexaemeron*) and Ambrose (*Hexaemeron*) insisted that sequential creation was necessary to things created, and to establish a sequence of creation and adornment.⁸¹ Through the hexaemeral tradition, starting with Philo *On the creation* 40, the adornment of the world is identified with the creation of plants and lights and animals.⁸² The ornament of the world fills it with living creatures, notable in view of the rhetorical association of ornamentation with enlivening. Basil in *Hexaemeron* 11.1 calls the fertility of the earth, specifically the growth and beauty of plants, its “perfect finishing” (*teleia kataskeuē*); the corresponding ornament of heaven is the stars.⁸³ The association of the stars with ornament has an origin in *Timaeus* 40a where they are called a varied or embroidered ornament (*kosmon pepoikilmenon*) but the attention given to variety of species in earth and waters in hexaemeral literature is closer to Cicero’s Stoic account

80 *Nicomachean Ethics* x.7–8. Theatre derives from the verb *theaomai*, which, like *theorein*, carries the meanings of seeing and contemplation; the two verbs are closely related.

81 Ambrose *Hexaemeron*, CSEL 32, I.7.27; Basil, “Hexaemeron”, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1895), 2nd ser., VIII, 51–107. Basil at *Hexaemeron* 1.5 claims that the visible world, subject to time, came to existence after the invisible, intellectual world. Robbins, *Hexaemeral Literature*, 42, notes that Basil’s is the first work devoted exclusively to creation; it was translated into Latin by Eustathius Afer. Augustine in *De Genesi ad litteram* IV.33 claims that God created simultaneously but chose to narrate creation sequentially; in IV.34 he claims that all things were made simultaneously and in six days. On his immense influence on hexaemeral commentary, see Robbins, *Hexaemeral Literature*, 36–7, 78–9.

82 Cf. Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, ed. I.P. Sheldon-Williams and É. Jeaneau (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968–), III, 711B–711C; Eriugena is however more interested in considering the intelligible forms within plant life, the invisible substance and species which subsist in it. Calcidius in the *Commentary in Timaeus* 120 refers to the heavens adorned with lights “luminibus exornasse”—a phrase which recalls *Timaeus* 40a as well as rhetorical descriptions of ornament.

83 See Ambrose, *Hex.* IV.2.5 where the heavens are compared to a paradise-like rose garden.

of nature in *De nat. deor.* 11.⁸⁴ Basil personifies the earth as “universal mother” in speaking of the ‘ornament’ of vegetal life, and of the adorning of creation as linked to its visibility, glossing Genesis 1:2 “The earth was invisible and unfinished”. One reason that the earth was invisible, Basil declares, is that “man, the spectator, did not yet exist”.⁸⁵ Ambrose in *Hexaemeron* 111.8.36 speaks of the “gratum spectaculum” presented by flowers; at 111.6 he says that the *species terrae* (plants) make the earth visible and composite. Ornament concerns species and their diverse members.

Basil’s account of plant life born as the adornment which the earth brings forth (*Hexaemeron* 11.3; V.1–10) takes us to the creation of variety. At V.2 the adornment of the earth is described as a “brilliant robe . . . displaying the infinite variety of plants”, a formulation inspired by rhetoric. The rhythmic temporality in pre-Socratic accounts of *kosmos* is replaced by plants as signs of the generation and decay of all created things.⁸⁶ Again these ‘ornaments’ show their usefulness in the larger plan of creation (V.3), and display its rationality and order where all things are planned to follow and fulfil their end (V.3–4).⁸⁷ While Basil gives most discussion to plants, the creatures of earth and water are also adornments (VII.1, VIII.1), as is the earth’s bringing forth of a living soul (VIII.2). The heavens with their bodies are discussed in VI.1 with the metaphor of the circus; as we contemplate them we rise from visible to invisible, and Basil likens leading the reader through the wonders of the universe to leading a visitor through a city.⁸⁸ The contemplation of creation as the means of ascent to God is stated in Romans 1:20, quoted by Basil, *Hexaemeron* I.6: “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made”. This ascent is reiterated throughout literature on *exornatio mundi*, notably by pseudo-Dionysius. For Ambrose in *Hexaemeron*, through the adornment of the world we believe in creation; the *exornatio mundi* also functions as an encyclopaedic array of exemplars and

84 Amongst Christian references to the ornament of the stars, see Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortations* 11.26.1 on the spectacle of heavens.

85 Cf. IX.5 on the spectacle of creation.

86 See Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* 111.7.29–31, 111.11.48 on plants as a figure for the ephemerality of human life.

87 Cf. *Hexaemeron* V.7 on how plants serve ends of human art, as in the use of trees in shipbuilding.

88 Cf. Philo, *Special Laws* 1.34 for the cosmos as metropolis. See Runia, *Philo of Alexandria*, 165–68, for comparison of creation with the founding of a city, its sources in Aristotle, *De philosophia* fr. 13 and the Stoic view of the cosmopolis in which man is a citizen; cf. *De nat. deor.* 11.62.154. The description of the praises of a city to a visitor also suggests sophistic panegyric or *ekphrasis*.

allegories, encouraging a figurative reading of creation. We shall return to this theme.

The *ornatus mundi* thus provided an armature for linking Genesis to *Timaeus* which appears with Philo and was influenced by Calcidius' fourth century commentary on *Timaeus*.⁸⁹ Like Ambrose in *Hexaemeron* 11.1.23, who calls God "non tanquam figurae inventor, sed tanquam operator naturae", Calcidius contrasts God's creation with demiurgic artifice as a kind of ornamentation: "ea quae existebant exornasse . . . formam et figuram congruam et convenientem ornatum dedisse".⁹⁰ In the *Timaeus* commentary 269, he speaks of matter, Silva, submitting herself to be adorned by Providentia, who penetrated and formed her fully.⁹¹

Calcidius was exploited by the philosophers of the Chartres school, such as William of Conches who in his glosses on *Timaeus* summarises the ornament of the world in terms of the variety of species in their proper elements; stars in heaven, fish in water, birds in the air, men on earth: "est ornatus mundi quicquid in singulis videtur elementis, ut stelle in celo, aves in aere, pisces in aqua, homines in terra".⁹² This description opens his treatment of the world soul, as

89 Calcidius, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. J.H. Wasnick, *Plato Latinus* IV, (London: Warburg Institute; Leiden: Brill, 1962); see J.C.M. van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter: His Doctrine and Sources* (Brill; Leiden, 1959); Peter Dronke, *The Spell of Calcidius* (Florence: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006).

90 Calcidius, *In Timaeum*, para. 31.

91 Cf. *In Tim.*, para. 286–87 on Aristotle's account of matter (*silva*) informed by beauty and ornament; para. 298–99 on 'Platonic' accounts of matter's loss of much of its evil nature through adornment; para. 312 on the exornation of matter as a limitation. For Calcidius' other comments on exornation as 'suffered' by matter, see para. 300.9–10. Calcidius' term *silva* for matter (para. 268) is developed by him and by Bernardus Silvestris in *De mundi universitate* (*Cosmographia*) into a personification. For Calcidius' varied discussions of *silva*, see Dronke, *Spell of Calcidius*, 25–33, noting Calcidius' transformation of *Physics* 191b35–192a34 on the distinction between material substrate and privation into an allegorical, "quasi-dramatic interplay".

92 William of Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, ed. E. Jeuneau (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), CCCM 203, 71.2–4. The qualification of species in each element recalls Calcidius, *In Tim.*, para. 119. Quoted also in Hellmut Wohl, *The Aesthetics of Italian Renaissance Art: A Reconsideration of Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7, and Criticos, "The Ornamental Dimension", 187. See Tullio Gregory, *Anima mundi* (Florence: Sansoni 1955), 177–78, 181–82, 201. Gregory discusses William's use of Augustine's *rationes seminales*. On Chartres, see Peter Ellard, *The Sacred Cosmos: Theological, Philosophical and Scientific Conversations in the Twelfth Century School of Chartres* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2007); Dronke, *Spell of Calcidius*, on the influence of Calcidius to the twelfth century.

the creatures that constitute *ornatus mundi* derive their movement, life and sentience from the soul, not the body.⁹³ Following Calcidius and the hexaemeral tradition, William distinguishes between creation and exornation, when the species are made; the second book of his *Glosae super Timaeum*, which concerns the genera of animals, treats of *ornatus* “tractat de ornatu”.⁹⁴ Tullio Gregory notes that *ornatus mundi* provided William with the basis for a philosophy of nature which identified it with the Platonic world soul; Eco remarks in more Thomistic terms that “even in a cosmological theory like this, the term *ornatus* seems to connote an individuating structure in things”.⁹⁵ William’s identification of *anima mundi* with nature encouraged association between the filling of intervals in the world-soul of *Timaeus* and the plenitude of creation in the *ornatus mundi*. Gregory says:

ornatus is thus not only an object of sensual *delectatio*: the investigation of forms and harmonic relations was in fact the basis of this *delectatio*.⁹⁶

In such a view, the beauty of creation becomes the external ordering of nature’s divinely ordained activity.

William of Conches gives importance to *ornatus mundi* as manifestation of the ‘work’ of nature, identified with the Platonic world soul. He also illuminates the ambiguities which attach to ornament in the hexaemeral literature. On one hand it displays nature’s variety and its life-giving force, making things grow and feel. We might recall here how insistently ornament in visual art shows the continuous burgeoning growth of plants or pseudo-plants. On the other hand, ornament is linked with secondary stages of creation, as William links the *exornatio* with the accidental, non-substantial qualities of the elements.⁹⁷

93 “Sed quia quaedam eorum sunt semper in motu, quaedam crescent, quaedam sentient, quaedam discernunt, hoc vero non ex natura corporis sed ex natura animae habent, de illa tractare incipit, scilicet de anima mundi”, William of Conches, *Glosae super Timaeum*, 71.4–8.

94 Ibid., 11.104.2–3, 11.175.53–55. On the distinction between creation and exornation in the Chartres School, see Edgar De Bruyne, *Études d’esthétique médiévale* (1946, repr. Geneva, Slatkine, 1975), 11, 258, 263, 269, 272, 277, n. 7, 284.

95 See Gregory, *Anima mundi*, 177–78, 181–82, 201, 213–14; Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, 34.

96 “L’ornato dunque non è solo oggetto di *delectatio* sensibile: la ricerca delle forme e dei rapporti armonici era infatti il fondamento di quella *delectatio*”, Gregory, *Anima mundi*, 214–5.

97 William of Conches, *Glosae super Timaeum* 2.176.1–5: “He said the elements were divided in their seats before the *exornatio mundi* . . . he joined them to have the same place and the substantial qualities which they now have but not those accidents or that ornament

Ornatus mundi appears in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Part 1, quest. 69, art. 2, on God's adornment of the world as part of his creation, and Part 1, quest. 70, on the three phases of creation: creation of heaven and earth without form, secondly the work of distinction and perfection of heaven and earth, giving substantial form to matter. With this ordering, beauty is also conferred. Last come the three days of adornment: creation of plants, lights, and creatures, corresponding to the distinction of heaven, waters and earth in the first three days. Aquinas distinguishes between perfection, which concerns intrinsic things, and adornment, which concerns the extrinsic (Part 1, quest. 70). As the work of the first days of creation was the "work of distinction", the days of adornment correspondingly concern movement, in the stars and creatures of sky, water and earth (Part 1, quest. 70.1). On the seventh day comes the direction and moving of created things to their proper work.⁹⁸ Here ornament is explicitly removed from the work of distinction between contraries and identified with the variety of species in each defined sphere of creation.

In William of Conches' identification of the world soul with nature, the qualitative harmony in the creation of species would show its relation to the quantitative harmony according to reason in *Timaeus*. With the species on earth and the corresponding heavenly bodies time becomes manifest, through the revolutions of the planets and the cyclical growth and decay of life on earth. This association of time and 'adorning' species appeared already in ancient evocations of the dance of the stars and the seasonal Hōrai; in Calcidius' rendering of *Timaeus* 39b–c the sun makes the rational measurement of motion and the choral dance of the planets visible.⁹⁹ Augustine in *De Genesi ad litteram* v.10 distinguishes the primordial time of creation from the generation of creatures from existing things; at v.12 he also states that time begins with the movement of creatures. Time thus becomes manifest with the 'adorning' species; time in the aspect of renewal and cyclical continuity, in the reiterated dance of the stars and the replenishment of generated things.¹⁰⁰ Calcidius in the *Commentary on Timaeus* para. 276 similarly states that there was no time

which they now have"; "Dixerat elementa ante exornationem mundi sedibus fuisse divisa . . . subiungit illa tunc habuisse eundem locum et easdem substantiales qualitates quas nunc habent sed non illas accidentales vel ornatum illum quem nunc habent".

98 Following Glacken, *Traces*, 234.

99 Miller, *Measures*, 259–60, notes there is no Greek clause corresponding to this passage in Calcidius, and that it is the source of the 'chorus' of gems representing the planets on Nature's crown in Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae* II, Prose 1 and of the dance of the planets in the circle of the sun, *Paradiso* 10.

100 Chrysostom, *On the Statutes*, Homily 9.6, compares the order of seasons to virgins dancing in a circle; an image which surely draws on dance of the Hōrai as allegories for the cyclical regeneration of time, and its fruits.

before the *exornatio mundi*: “neque enim tempus ullum fuisse ante mundi exornationem”. This temporality provides the context for historical, narrative human time, which adapts and shapes the natural world to its ends.

Beauty and Ornament

The Stoic and hexaemeral theme of the world as beautiful, perfect object of contemplation and something fitted for human use leads to an important subject.¹⁰¹ This is the distinction between beauty contemplated in itself and beauty relative to a thing or end, associated with the apt or the appropriate—and with ornament. The principal treatment comes in Plato’s *Hippias Major*, in the distinction between the *kalon* and *prepon*, where the latter is differentiated from beauty for its relative or instrumental character.¹⁰² Contemplated beauty and fittingness formed the subject of Augustine’s lost early treatise *De pulchro et apto*, which he discusses in *Confessions* IV.20–27, where the relative character of the *aptum* again contrasts with the absolute nature of the *pulchrum*.¹⁰³ The distinction is restated by Alberti in a noted passage in *De re aedificatoria* VI.2. The distinctions between beauty and ornament, decorum or the apt are based on the kind of consideration given to an object; a thing—a tree, for example—may be beautiful considered in itself but also fulfil a function relative to other things. In the case of Plato, the attempt to separate beauty from the relative is part of an attempt to disentangle it from the relativism and subjectivism associated with the Sophists. The Platonic tradition thus insists on beauty’s being

101 For Christian discussions of the world as habitat, see Basil, *Hexaemeron* v.9. Lactantius views Stoic accounts of nature as evidence of divine creation centred on man; see *Divine Institutes* I.5.19–26, II.5, II.8.8–67 (on *creatio ex nihilo*), VII.3, VII.4 on the world created for human use. See also the second century *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, which echoes *De natura deorum*; Glacken, *Traces*, 177–81; Robbins, *Hexaemeral Literature*. The double adornment of nature—in creation and by human invention—appears in Basil, *Hexaemeron* II.2; Ambrose’s letter to Valentinian; in Augustine, *City of God* XXII.24; Theodoret Bishop of Cyrrhus, *Providence*; Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*. See Glacken, *Traces*, 297–313, for references; Glacken discusses the related theme of the monastic settlement which orders the landscape to human use and changes it from wilderness to an anticipation of paradise in Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Malmesbury; see *ibid.*, 213, 303, 313. Human vulnerability is part of the divine plan, thus Origen in *Against Celsus* IV.76 says that man was made needy so he had to discover the arts.

102 *Hippias major* 288c–295e.

103 For discussion, see Svoboda, *L’Esthétique de Saint Augustin*, 11–16; Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 15, notes the distinction in Isidore, *Sententiarum libri* I.8.18 (PL 83, 551–2) which defines the *pulchrum* and *aptum* as parts of *decor*: the apt is what is beautiful in relation to something else.

properly discussed in ontological and moral terms for which aesthetic delight is at best a starting point, at worst a delusive snare. The beautiful-apt distinction is not present in Aristotle, who regards beauty as the aptness of a thing to fulfil its end. Aristotelian ethics thus provide a more fertile ground for notions of decorum as well as for a reading of ornament linked to notions of actualisation. This shall be discussed below.

Thus theologies or philosophies which speak of the world as *kosmos* in all senses regard its creation as embodiment in relation to a transcendent creator or prototype; in this sense Gregory and Wetherbee saw fable used to explore natural philosophy in the cosmological interests of the Chartres school.¹⁰⁴ Even where it discloses the greatest loveliness and perfection, ornament has a relative quality or a role in relation to the beautiful. This role may be mediation or instrumental, as ornament is employed to serve a certain purpose or end.¹⁰⁵ One description of ornament is the use of the beautiful as relative. It is this relative aspect which provokes the Socratic discussions of *Philebus* and *Hippias Major*, with the attempt to conceive the *kalon* beyond relation and the partial or subordinate character it entails. This should be distinguished from conceptions of beauty as relation such as we find in Aquinas, who defines beauty as actualised in the relation of the object and the mind which knows it, and apprehends its organised structure as a substantial form.¹⁰⁶

To extol universal order as *kosmos* is to regard it as the context of all species and actions. The immediate context (place, time, kind, mode) of particular human actions is narrower and the role of ornament in them discussed in terms of appropriateness. Behind each given context of action or artifice, there is the universal background, with its conditions of orderliness which sustain all things; thus Cicero in discussion of rhythm in *De oratore* 111.45.178–46.181 celebrates the rational design, utility and beauty throughout creation and in artifice. If art may improve on nature, it does so by taking nature as object of imitation.

104 Gregory, *Anima mundi*; Winthrop Wetherbee *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century. The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

105 On this theme, see Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*.

106 On this “aesthetics of the organism”, see Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 74–91. For a general statement of medieval aesthetics influenced by Thomist views of beauty actualised in the relation between the beautiful object and the mind which contemplates it, see *ibid.*, 15: “an apprehension of all of the relations, imaginative and supernatural, subsisting between the contemplated object and a cosmos which opened onto the transcendent”.

Emanation, Light and Ornament

Contemplation of the order of creation thus assists the ascent from the visible to the invisible, an argument reiterated down the Platonic and Christian-Platonic tradition, from Plato to Philo to Paul (Romans 1:20) to Plotinus to Augustine to pseudo-Dionysius to John Scotus Eriugena and Ficino. What enables this ascent is not just the perfect ordering of creation but the use of light as the privileged type for the action of the transcendent upon the created. This has an origin in the celebrated Platonic analogy of the sun for the good in *Republic* 507b–509c but is developed into an ontology with Plotinus' *Enneads* and in hexaemeral literature, as when Ambrose in *Hexaemeron* 1.9.33 speaks of ornament as dependent on light, since form is not apparent without light.¹⁰⁷ Plotinus is attentive to the necessary place of matter, indeterminacy or evil in the world, but light forms the consistent image for the operation of the Soul of the All, which “overflows” as it contemplates the Intellectual Principle and so creates the world (*Ennead* 11.3.18, 11.9.3, 111.8.9, VI.7.31, VI.7.36).¹⁰⁸ Thus Plotinus speaks of the dyadic relation between determinacy and indeterminacy, yet the intellectual, the soul and the form-giving is characterised by superabundance; its radiance floods to create other things, which descend progressively into materiality from the contemplation and participation in the Intellectual Principle. The corollary of this is the exalted status of contemplation (*theōria*) as the highest form of activity, in which even nature, and all natural life, even plants, are engaged, with the supreme entity as a “Seeing that lives”, where every life is a form of thought (111.8.8). In this vision of the extended role of *theōria*, all acts and sensation have the aim of producing vision.

The ornament and order of the world, so often extolled by Plotinus, is not just its plenitude and harmonious order, but is constituted and revealed as such by the overflowing of transcendent, superabundant radiance. At 111.2.14 he speaks of how each part in the whole increases the beauty of the whole as it increases in value itself:

107 “unde mundi ornatus, nisi a luce exordium sumere? . . . lux est quae reliquos domus commendat ornatus . . . bonus auctor ita lucem dixit, ut mundum ipsum infuse aperiret lumine, atque ejus speciem venustraret”.

108 See *Enneads* 11.3.9 on the universal soul which “flashes down its rays” to the embodied soul; the same two-fold (intellectual-embodied) quality is attributed to the sun and other heavenly bodies; 111.2.2 on reason as the emanation from the Intellectual Principle; 111.3.4 on Providence as the illumination of the lower world by the higher. Plotinus’ exegesis of Plato’s myth of the birth of Love in *Symposium* (*Enneads* 111.5) concerns the Soul and Reason-Principles which overflow as they contemplate the Intelligence.

Even from this place of man, from man's own self, something gleams forth, as the stars shine in the divine firmament, so that all appears one great and lovely figure—living or wrought in the furnaces of craftsmanship—with stars radiant not only in the ears and on the brow but on the breasts too.¹⁰⁹

If Plotinus speak of the patterning of limit and unlimited, the metaphor of light as the emanation of the One envisages the participation of matter in form not as a conjunction of light and dark but as a reflective surface illuminated. Thus in I.1.8 the Soul is said to be present in bodies not by division, but as a face is caught in many mirrors.¹¹⁰ The very excess of the divine is the condition of its relation to what it creates; the divine is otherwise beyond being, and unlike all else, as pseudo-Dionysius repeatedly insists.¹¹¹ This creative emanation shares with ornament its super-abundance, its splendour and its creation or illumination of a relation. Pseudo-Dionysius also speaks of the emanating light as beauty which proceeds into the world, creating relation and order (*Divine Names* 701–705).

Pseudo-Dionysius opens his important discussion with light's gathering and unification of all things possessed of reason and mind, which perfects them and returns them to the truly real (701a–b). Beauty similarly calls or gathers things to itself (hence pseudo-Dionysius puns on *kalos-kallein*) and flashes its light onto all things, imparting harmony and splendour (701c). The beauty of the beautiful is unchanging, not relational, although created beings each exhibit their own way of beauty (701d–704a). Beauty as transcendent property is identified by pseudo-Dionysius with the Good and the One; in a formulation reminiscent of *Symposium* he calls Beauty the force that holds all things

109 The reference to stars on ears, eyes and breasts refers to the cosmos as a living being, with stars as its highest part. In the next two chapters Plotinus gives a striking allegory of the rapine and conflict in the world, “this bandit war of man and beast” as a play, culminating in the image of life which seeks pattern like a pantomimic dancer and harmony as an image for the contrariety which is necessary to the Universal Principle (III.2.15–16). See III.2.17 for the extension of the Reason-Principle into contrariety and the desire of its partial members for unification, towards fullness of life. Here again the dance metaphor is used to designate the necessary presence of opposition, leading to extended theatre and music metaphors for the presence of all types and stations of humans in life. At III.3.1 things come and return to unity but unfold and contraries are produced.

110 Cf. *Enneads* I.1.10 on the Soul as a radiation or emanation; I.6.7 on the drowning of Narcissus as a metaphor for the soul enamoured of its reflection in matter.

111 Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 588a–b, 593c; *Mystical Theology* 1000c, 1025a, 1040a–1048b.

in existence through their longing to have beauty (704a).¹¹² Pseudo-Dionysius insists that the beautiful is the source of the existence of things, of their unity but also of their dissimilarity (704b). It unites all things through difference as well as through identity; through it all things share in opposites (704b–c). Thus it is the source of harmony which holds things together, of the love “which does not obliterate identity” (704c). From this love and harmony, which hold different levels of being together, come persistence, intermingling and “the unceasing emergence of all things” (ibid.). The Beautiful and Good are the source of all movement and preservation, and from them come all the relations between the universal one and the many, as well as qualities and quantities; among these relations are the pair discussed in *Philebus*, limit and the unlimited (705c).

The discussion starts with the Beautiful as a transcendent property which acts like light, uniting things and imparting its splendour to them. The conspicuous activity of the Beautiful as it proceeds into the world however is to create and maintain relations between things; in other words, maintain the patterning of likeness and unlikeness between them. The ‘unceasing emergence’ of all things signifies their appearance within this relational order.

In pseudo-Dionysius transcendent beauty as unlimited light creates earthly beauty as a pattern of oppositions which holds all together; this complex order can reveal the harmony of all things while light reveals their identity. In the pseudo-Dionysian vision, the transcendent unlimited descends into the forms it has created, so that we ascend by apprehending the unlimited in form. This same light however creates the different qualities in things which are the condition of their relation.

The emanation of light shows the procession of the divine through creation; it is the source of sameness *and* of relation. Thus the light metaphysics of pseudo-Dionysius goes with his symbolic theology, based on the unlikeness between compared objects. As Eriugena noted, the affirmative and negative ways are in harmony.¹¹³ Participation in light signals the likeness between things on a rational basis; symbolic theology uses figures to disclose insights about the structure of reality. Pseudo-Dionysius’ source for the likeness-unlikeness distinction is Proclus’ distinction between eikonic and symbolic in the second chapter of Book I of the essay *On what Plato says in the Republic against*

112 For discussion of pseudo-Dionysius’ influence on Medieval reflections of beauty as transcendental property, see Eco, *Art and Beauty* 19–27, esp. 24–25. Earlier Neoplatonic sources are *Enneads* I.6.6, I.6.7, I.6.9.

113 *Periphyseon* I, 461B.

Homer and Poetry.¹¹⁴ Here Proclus suggests that the grotesque outer surface of the Homeric myths—the reason for Socrates' condemnation in *Republic* 3—may make them singularly appropriate to the gods, since it provokes a search for the truth. He draws an analogy between such myths and revelations made to us through symbols when we sleep by the guardian *daimones* that seek to elevate us towards the gods. The relation of surface to content in the mythic images should not be judged in terms of the relation of model to copy, but of symbol to a thing which has an affinity to it by virtue of analogy—in this sense Proclus describes mythic poetry as daimonic (85.26–86.23).

Proclus emphasises that symbolism cannot be considered as a kind of representation, since it hints at the nature of reality through the medium of elements contrary in their nature, at the beautiful through the ugly (198.15–19). The daimonic character of symbolic myth lies in its power to carry the reader from the lowest level through the analogically connected levels that comprise the structure of reality, until the whole of that reality is revealed. If the lower levels of reality are related analogically to those higher, from which they emanate, higher entities, that is, gods (not the divine One), also communicate their influence to all other things which are fit to participate in them, creating sympathy between all things (*Elements of Theology*, prop. 140).¹¹⁵ Proclus gives here a basis for a theory of magic and theurgy; he is also working out a model which works identically for mythic symbol, metaphysics and theurgic or magical ritual. Miller comments

'Kosmopoiia kata logon' (verbal cosmos-making) was what Proclus called the special literary activity inspired by Philosophy's Muses [which] entailed not only the composition of poems designed to imitate the rhythmic sounds and symmetrical movements of the cosmic chorus but also the employment of those poems as theurgic talismans by which . . . all the other gifts of the gods could be drawn down from the heavens . . . to the lowest depths of existence.¹¹⁶

114 See James Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 50. For translation and edition of the whole work, see A.J. Festugière, *Commentaire sur la République* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1970). On Proclus and allegorical exegesis of antique poetic theology, see Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1986).

115 Cf. *Enneads* 11.3.7, "all teems with symbol", "all things must be enchained; and the sympathy and correspondence obtaining in any one closely knit organism must exist, first, and most intensely, in the All". In the same section Plotinus muses that if we can establish "the comprehensive principle of co-ordination" we will have a reasonable basis for divination; unlike later Neoplatonists, Plotinus eschewed theurgy.

116 Miller, *Measures*, 473.

The ontological order, the symbols of theological poetry and those to be used in ritual and religion are brought together in what Proclus calls an

art which calls on the gods with the holiest rites and mystic symbols, and invokes the gifts of the daimons through the medium of a secret sympathy by means of visible passions . . . although every myth is daimonic on its surface, it is divine with respect to its secret doctrine.¹¹⁷

The analogical cosmos described by Proclus is signalled also by Plotinus at *Enneads* 11.3.5. Such analogical models are propagated by Renaissance Neoplatonism, in Ficino's *Theologia Platonica* or Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi*; they also degenerate into the patterns of magical correspondence found in Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*. If Proclus claims an identical model for myth-making and magic, how do we differentiate theurgy from the role of ornament in emanative cosmologies, where each level of being overflows to the next? Theurgy also worked with notions of correspondence and sympathy, which insisted on the connectedness between all created things.¹¹⁸ The agents of the universe governed by sympathies are the *daimones* who activate correspondences and symbolic relations, as Proclus says.¹¹⁹

The relationship of ornament to daimonic agency resurfaces repeatedly, and is not just confined to Renaissance art theories touched by magical thought and their ancient sources. Oleg Grabar's study of Islamic ornament opens with discussion of Plato's description of Eros as *daimōn* (*Symposium* 202e), as a figure for the mediation of ornament.¹²⁰ The putto, *eros* or *spiritello* as a figure for agency, who conveys attributes or energies, becomes one of the most

117 Proclus, *On what Plato says . . . against Homer and Poetry*, 78.18–79.4. Translation from Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, 56.

118 See the discussion in Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, 54–57.

119 Ibid., 58–9. Dillon, *Handbook*, 132–33, notes that commentary on *Timaeus* raised the question of demonology; Plato in *Statesman* 271d and *Laws* 4.713c–d places daimons over each class of living things and Aristotle in *De Philosophia* (fr. 21 Rose; cf. *De natura deorum* 11.42) argues that every part of the universe must contain rational creatures appropriate to it. In pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* (Comm., chap. 13); Calcidius, *In Tim.*, 139–46; Apuleius *De deo Socratis* 6–12; Philo *On the Giants* 6–9, daimons are viewed as the proper inhabitants of the air, intermediaries between humans and gods. Calcidius, *In Tim.*, 130 argues similarly that the intermediary elements must be filled with rational beings appropriate to their place, as the outer elements are. The question is expanded in Proclus' *Commentary on Timaeus* 3.104.26–112. 19.

120 Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 45.

prominent ornamental motifs of the Renaissance.¹²¹ The daimonic qualities of eros as an activating force appear at the very origins of the rhetorical-sophistic tradition, with Gorgias, who links ornament in speech as a means of manipulation with love and magic.¹²² Like ornament, magical operations are designed to procure advantage and increase in being for the magician.¹²³ However, the evocations of *exornatio mundi* concern contemplation; ornament procures advantage in particular situations where it makes things more efficacious or appropriate. By contrast, the advantage procured by magical means concerns the universal order, manipulated to obtain benefit for the magician. Proclus' analogy between dreams and the 'daimonic revelation' of symbolic myth also points to the links between fantasy and ornament, discussed below.

Pseudo-Dionysius eschews the daimonic aspects of Proclus' symbolic representation. Representation by unlikeness is rendered by him as a way of ascending towards the divine by privation; the point is not to say that God is a stone, for example, but to start with obvious grounds of dissimilarity and move from a greater to a lesser number of negations, such as fire or light. The advantage of this method, as pseudo-Dionysius reiterates, is that it discourages us from identifying the God beyond being with anything that is and limiting the divine super-essence to a defined essence. This also means that all things show the continuity of being and reason and are simultaneously figures, symbols or enigmas for one another. In this sense the ornament of the world also becomes a book of figures or cyphers. The point appears in *Enneads* 11.3.5 where Plotinus, commenting on the combination of oppositions and variety in the cosmos, writes:

All the members will be in sympathy with the entire animal frame to which they belong. Only so can there be a unity and total harmony. And in such a total, analogy will make every part a Sign.¹²⁴

121 See Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). A disturbing account of the relation between Eros, ornament and daimonic activation of figures comes in the House of Busyrane episode in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* 11.11–12 where the daimonic is indeed demonic; see James Nohnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 471–90.

122 Gorgias, *Encomium on Helen*, discussed in Chapter 2.

123 See Henry Maguire, "Magic Geometry in Early Christian Floor Mosaics and Textiles", *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 44 (1994), 265–274, on the possible apotropaic use of repeated motifs in Byzantine culture.

124 See also Plotinus' description of the Universal Sympathy in the Intellectual Principle where all things exist, but not according to distinction, as in the material world: "division is not determined by a boundary but goes forever inwards" (*Enneads* vi.7.14).

Allegories, Integumenta and Fable

The conception of creation narratives as leading from the *visibilia* to the *invisibilia* and the doctrine that the material world was modelled on a paradigm or archetype provided a strong basis for figural relations between the two realms. This brings us to allegory as a mode of interpretation which both sets up a tension between the surface of the text as a veil or figure (an ornament of speech) and regards its content as signifying truths about the structure of the world and the fate of the soul.¹²⁵ In discussion of Neoplatonic analogies between the cosmos, “noblest of living things”, and the literary text, Coulter quotes Olympiodorus’ commentary on *Alcibiades* 105c: “just as the cosmos is a meadow full of all kinds of living things, so too, a literary composition must be full of characters of every description”.¹²⁶ The remarks in this section are concerned with the role of ornament in this material; they do not aspire to a treatment of cosmic allegory *per se*.

The long antique tradition of cosmic allegory stretches from Stoics such as Crates, Cornutus and Heraclitus’ *Homeric Questions* to Philo, culminating with the Neoplatonic mythoplasts: Porphyry, Hermias, Iamblichus, Synesius and Proclus.¹²⁷ Its great foci were Homer and, later through Macrobius, Virgil.¹²⁸ The allegorical tradition informed Christian typology, codified in the “four

125 See Lamberton, *Homer*; Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1964), 109ff.

126 Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, 95. The emphasis on variety suggests a departure from Socrates’ demand in *Republic* 3 for poetry which contains only *typoi* of virtue. The related *poeta creator* topos also has a basis in canon law, where the term *de nihil facere* was used in discussion of papal power as *vicarius dei*, related especially to the making of new laws and then extended to legal discussion of imperial prerogatives. Ernst Kantorowicz, “The Sovereignty of the Artist. A Note on Legal Maxims and Renaissance Theories of Art”, in *De artibus opuscula XL. Essays in honour of Erwin Panofsky* ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), I, 267–79, argues that “artistic theology followed certain trails first marked out by the political theology of medieval jurists”.

127 For history of this tradition, see Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* I, *From the Sixth Century BC to the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Hafner, 1967); Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Lamberton, *Homer*. Amongst Homeric allegories, see Asclepiades of Myrlea’s allegory of the cup of Nestor (*Iliad* XI.632–7) as an imitation of the cosmos, preserved in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI.489c–92d.

128 Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 5.14.8, said of Homer’s epithets: “quibus velut sideribus micat divini carminis variata maiestas”. On the topos of Homeric *varietas* or *poikilia*, see pseudo-Plutarch, *De Homero*.

senses" of scriptural exegesis.¹²⁹ This tradition is not our subject except that it gave such weight to the role of figures of speech (*figura* used as the translation of *typos*).¹³⁰ Hexaemeral commentary included allegorical understanding of creation, promoted by Origen (*De Genesi*), apparent in passages of Basil and conspicuous in Ambrose.¹³¹ Hexaemeral literature also permitted a variety of approaches—allegorizing of the creatures in Ambrose, in the manner of a bestiary, typology and the pseudo-Dionysian symbolic mode. Medieval commentators who expound the role of symbolism, like Richard of Saint-Victor and Grosseteste, also stress the role of imagination in summoning up the images which these figures employ; fantasy and symbol go together.¹³²

129 Christian allegory is generally seen as descending from Philo through Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and most fully expanded with Origen (185–c. 254), who developed Philo's literal and allegorical sense into a three-fold model of literal, moral and intellectual or spiritual sense, with the third level supposedly accessible only to Christians. On the four-fold allegory of medieval exegesis, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'écriture* (Paris: Aubier, 1959–64). The four senses in Bede or Aquinas are clearly distinguished: literal-historical, allegorical or typological (the Old Testament as figure for the New Testament), moral and anagogic concerning eschatology. Augustine in *De utilitate credendi* gives the model: literal-aetiological (concerning cause), analogical (concerning the agreement of Old and New Testament) and allegorical. Space precludes discussion of Augustine's conception of *sacramentum* and its relation to his views of exegesis and revelation; see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

130 In Galatians 4:21–26, Paul uses the *allegoroumena* for a typological interpretation of Ishmael and Isaac for the old and new covenant; on the Hellenic and Rabbinical antecedents, see R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Richmond VA: John Knox Press, 1959).

131 See Origen's treatment of the *ornatio mundi* in *De Genesi* 1.3–1.5. On Origen's hexaemeral commentary as applied to decoration, see Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987). Amongst Ambrose's numerous allegories in *Hexaemeron* are the sea as a metaphor for Ecclesia, III.5.23–24; III.7 on the flower which falls before the plough as a figure for human life; III.12 the vine as figure for the church; III.13 on figurative significance of trees; IV.2 on the sun made by the Son as ornament to other lights, and on the sun and moon as figures for Christ and Ecclesia; fish and birds as allegories and exemplars through Book 5. The allegorical meanings are presented alongside discussion of the use of plants.

132 Richard of Saint-Victor, *Benjamin Minor* 15, PL 196, 10–11; Robert Grosseteste, *Commentary on 'The Celestial Hierarchy'*, discussed in *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100–1375: The Commentary Tradition*, ed. A.J. Minnis, A.B. Scott with David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 168–69. Hugh of St Victor employs a threefold model—literal, tropological (moral) and allegorical (*Didascalion* 5.2, PL 176, 789).

Scriptural and literary allegories were hermeneutically distinct in that literal truth was claimed for the first versus the fabulous character of the second.¹³³ Dante's appropriation of scriptural allegory in *Convivio* 2.1, in the Can Grande epistle and the *Commedia* shows the daring intent to stretch the range of poetry into areas claimed by theology.¹³⁴ Like theological allegory, Dante's work revealed conditions of salvation beyond the 'cosmic' content of poetic fable, which revealed conditions of being through the *integumenta* of artifice.

The philosophical fable or commentary which concerns us here is generally concerned with the revelation of nature or universal ordering which permits the reader or protagonist to rise from the *visibilia* to the *invisibilia*.¹³⁵ This progression, made by means of the disciplines and other personified guides, requires the universal display or figuration of the *visibilia*.¹³⁶ The elaborately dressed personifications of Philosophy, the Arts, the intellectual or moral faculties and Nature in Boethius, Capella, Bernardus Silvestris or Alan of Lille,

133 Aquinas, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* 7.6 reiterates the argument of Augustine in *De doctrina Christiana* and Hugh of St Victor in *De sacramentis* and the *Didascalion* that while in human discourse, words signify, in scripture, things also signify. The figurative meaning of non-divine discourse is for Aquinas contained at the literal level, since what is to be signified in a poem lies within the poem. The literal meaning, on which the spiritual meanings are founded, also provides a basis for a reading in which things signify; God can use the course of things subjected to providence (i.e. the course of things in time) to signify other things (7.6.3). Aquinas focuses on literal meaning as the narrative of redemptive history, and the levels of figurative meaning that can rise from this providential narrative. Aquinas makes similar arguments, in *Summa Theologiae* 1a 1, Articles 9–10, again affirming the derivation of the figural senses from the literal sense.

134 Dante speaks of the allegorical sense in poetic, not theological terms as "hidden under a cloak of stories... a truth hidden under a beautiful fiction", "che si nasconde sotto 'l manto di queste favole, ed è una veritate ascosa sotto bella menzogna", *Convivio* 2.1, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Milan: Rizzoli, 1993), 84.

135 Cf. Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus* 11. 14–16: "quia per ea quae facta sunt visibilia comprehenduntur invisibilia et per cognitionem creaturarum ascenditur ad cognitionem Creatoris": "for through the things that were created visible, invisible things are understood, and through knowledge of creatures ascent is made to knowledge of the Creator".

136 On the soul's ascent by means of the arts see Capella's *De nuptiis*, Augustine's *De ordine* 11 and the Chartres commentators, such as Thierry of Chartres in the *Heptateuchon*. John of Salisbury calls the work of literature an image of all the liberal arts, described in terms of ornamentation (*Metalogicon* 1.24). See Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry*, 21–24, on knowledge of cosmos and the self through the liberal arts in Adelhard of Bath, *De eodem et diverso*, on John of Salisbury and on the liberal arts as a single means to philosophical understanding in Thierry of Chartres, *Heptateuchon*.

and the increasingly hierarchical deployment of the Muses as planetary Sirens assigned to arts and faculties of the soul, signal a cosmology where ordering and ornament are inseparable—and reflect the artifice of the allegory.

In hexaemeral literature, the variety of species is the adornment of the world. In allegorical literature from later antiquity, such adornment becomes a veil or *integumentum*, exemplified in images like the varied robe of Nature, in which Macrobius said she hid her secrets, as she desires writers to divulge them through the allegories of *narratio fabulosa*.¹³⁷ This veil of nature has its counterpart in the pseudo-Dionysian account of the divine ray which can only shine on us wrapped in many veils (*Celestial Hierarchy* 1.2).¹³⁸ In Macrobius' figure three concepts of ornament merge: the *exornatio* of the earth with flowers, the association of ornament with surface or dress and the literary figure of allegory. It suggests philosophical allegory as *integumentum*, where the poet's ornament—his fable and artifice—provide figures for the divulgation of the *ornatus mundi* and its underlying order. *Timaeus* was pre-eminent amongst such fables for writers of the Chartres school such as William of Conches, whose *Glosae super Timaeum* treats it as veiled in *integumenta*.¹³⁹ Thus *Timaeus*, the philosophical creation text which underpinned hexaemeral commentary, was

137 Macrobius, *In somnium Scipionis* 1.2. 7–21, esp. 17–18, where Macrobius distinguishes between *fabulae*, like Aesop, which exhort the mind with some image of virtue and *narratio fabulosa*, like Orpheus, Hesiod or rituals, founded in truth. Macrobius speaks of nature's covering as “vario rerum tegmine operimentoque”. The image of nature hiding herself goes back to Heraclitus, frag. 123; cf. Julian, *Contra Heraclium* 216; Themistius, *Orations* 5.69b; 12.159b. See Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations into the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 47–49, for William of Conches' commentary on this passage. The image of nature's robe or cloak could also be deployed without the notion of allegorical veil; see Henry Maguire, “The Mantle of Earth”, *Illinois Classical Studies* 12 (1987), 221–28, for some Byzantine uses, from mosaic to textile motif.

138 Amongst the many expositions of this idea, see Thomas Gallus, paraphrase of the *Celestial Hierarchy* 1, translated in Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 174.

139 For William of Conches' and Abelard's view of fable, see Dronke, *Fabula*; Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 40, on the prologue of *Glosae super Timaeum* where William of Conches contrasts *verba*, *littera*, and *integumenta*. Wetherbee discusses recourse to *fabula* and *involutra* in order to assimilate *Timaeus* to the Trinity and asserts that the nature and implications of *integumenta* were most decisively established by William, who gives the simplest *integumenta* as etymologies (ibid., 37, 43, 45–6); cf. De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, 11, 280–301. Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 30, notes Thierry of Chartres' attempt to reconcile *Timaeus* with Genesis and states that Calcidius, Capella's *De nuptiis*, Macrobius' *In Somnium Scipionis*, the philosophical treatises of Apuleius, and the Hermetic *Asclepius* were all valued as commentaries on *Timaeus*, while Boethius' prayer *O qui perpetua*, with its summary of *Timaeus* was often glossed.

itself regarded as myth, a treatment encouraged in the dialogue by Timaeus himself who calls his account a “likely story” (*eikonta mython*, *Tim.* 29d).¹⁴⁰

The *integumentum* was described in commentaries on *Aeneid* I–VI and Capella’s *De nuptiis* ascribed to Bernardus Silvestris as a species of *involucrum*, the other species being allegory.¹⁴¹ The author distinguishes the two by ascribing *integumentum* to poetic texts, allegory to Scripture.¹⁴² In this sense, *integumenta* becomes a mode of poetic writing as well as a philosophical allegory.¹⁴³ Thus Ralph of Longchamps’s commentary to Alan of Lille’s *Anticlaudianus* glosses Alan’s allusion to “stilum phalerasque poete”:

just as *phalerae* veil and ornament a horse, so the integumental mode of speech veils something hidden, encloses it within, and ornaments the words without.¹⁴⁴

140 See Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic*, 159–62. Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 47, sees William of Conches’ commentary on *Timaeus* as conceiving the whole work as *integumentum*. Miller, *Measures*, 474, discusses Proclus’ view that the dialogue was an allegorical poem, a “kosmopoiia kata logon” (verbal cosmic poem) analogous to the “kosmopoiia kata noun” of the demiurge (*In Timaeum* 1.9). Dronke sees Calcidius’ *In Timaeum* as presenting “personifications . . . with almost dramatic rôles in the unfolding of the cosmos” (*Spell of Calcidius* xvi).

141 See Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 48, on the new significance which Virgil, Ovid, Boethius and Capella acquired when the role of *integumenta* was revealed.

142 See *ibid.*, 38, on Abelard’s *Introductio ad theologiam* and *Theologia christiana* as an early use of *involucrum*. The author of the *Aeneid* and Capella commentaries described *integumentum* as “a kind of picturesque writing which envelops its meaning with a fabulous narrative, and for this reason it is also called *involucrum*”: “Integumentum est genus demonstrationis [sic] sub fabulosa narratione veritatis involvens intellectum, unde etiam dicitur involucrum”, *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid of Virgil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris*, ed. Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press 1977), 3, ll. 14–15, quoted by L.E. Marshall, “Phalerae Poetae and the Prophet’s New Words in the *Anticlaudianus* of Alan of Lille”, *Florilegium*, 1 (1979), 242–83. Marshall notes that the commentator’s terms and their application survived in John of Garland’s *Poetria Parisiana*, written c. 1220–35, who describes *integumentum* as “ueritas in specie fabule palliata”, allegory as “ueritas in uerbis historie palliata” (*ibid.*, 250). On Alan’s preference for simplicity in preaching, see De Bruyne, *Études d’esthétique médiévale*, II, 282–83.

143 Marshall, “Phalerae”, 248–50.

144 *In Anticlaudianum Alani commentum*, 67, ll. 12–15: “sicut enim phalerae velant equum et ornant, sic integumentalis modus loquendi aliquid mysticum velat et claudit interius et ornat verba exterius”, trans. Marshall, “Phalerae”, 248, who notes the rare adjectival form *integumentalis*. Alan’s phrase comes in the poetic invocation of the *Anticlaudianus*.

Marshall links the “phaleric” mode to Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s “Tullian” (Ciceronian) style, distinguished by “sentencie gratuitas” and “verborum florida exornacio”, and typified by writers who combine metaphoric brilliance with high moral purpose, such as Alan of Lille in *De planctu naturae*, Silvestris’ *Cosmographia* or the *Architrenius* of John of Hauville.¹⁴⁵ Marshall comments:

All three authors devoted ornament to the service of what Macrobius had called *narratio fabulosa* or to what contemporary writers termed *integumentum*.¹⁴⁶

Alan rejected the use of *phalerae* in preaching; they are proper to ‘integral’ poetry, when it treats of natural philosophy.¹⁴⁷ It is worth noting for subsequent stages of our argument that the *figurae* which cover Nature’s cosmological costume in *De planctu naturae* II, Prose 1 are qualified as lies, phantasms, theatrical illusions and images made by sophistic art; figures are both integument and deceit.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, Faith in Alan’s *Anticlaudianus* is dressed in garments which portray, as in a book, scriptural figures: allegories, not *integumenta*.¹⁴⁹

145 Ibid., 251. Marshall discusses Nature’s use of *phalerae* in *De planctu naturae* to veil the disagreeable detail of sexual aberration and in *De nuptiis* III where Satura discusses the dress of fiction and personification given to Martianus’ book (ibid., 252–53). Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 104, notes that Bernardus Silvestris’s poetry was used by Matthew of Vendome to illustrate *ornatus difficilis*.

146 Marshall, “Phalerae” 251.

147 Ibid., 254–55.

148 Ibid., 258. The theme of deceit or uncertain appearance comes in allusions to the imaginary or artificial, the changing colours of Nature’s hexaemeral robe and in the animals figured there, like the quail which can be lured by imitative voices (“*imaginarie vocis depiebant sophismata*”, *De planctu naturae*, II, l. 183). The images of animals are likened to a stage production, flowers bloom on Nature’s shoes by sophistic art (“*arte sophistica*”, ibid., III, Metrum 2, l. 24); the dress of Largitas in ibid., XVI, Prose 8, ll. 125–26 is “*imaginaria picturae probabilitas sophistico picturationis praestigio*”, “a picture unreal but credible by reason of the sophistic delusion inherent in painting”, *De planctu naturae*, trans. James Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980), 203. Nature’s cosmological crown does not deceive the eye with “*luce sophistica*” (ibid., II, Prose 1, l. 42). Genius, Nature’s helper, inscribes parchment with rapid images of famous men and women; his multi-coloured clothes show constantly changing images of objects (ibid., XVIII, Prose 9, ll. 64–910. For Alan’s association of art with sophistry, in bringing non-existent things into existence and turning lies into truth, see *Anticlaudianus* I.122–30, discussed in De Bruyne, *Études d’esthétique médiévale*, II, 298.

149 *Anticlaudianus*, ed. R. Bossuat, *Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Âge*, 1 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1955), VI.31–37; Marshall, “Phalerae” 258–59. In *Anticlaudianus* I.313–15, Prudencia unfastens

Wetherbee regarded Alan of Lille as attempting to combine the opposed approaches of the “rationalist” William of Conches and the “symbolist” Hugh of Saint Victor.¹⁵⁰ Wetherbee characterises the rationalism of the Chartres school as “poetry as the highest expression of the rationalist view, completing its hard-won insights into the *musica mundana*”.¹⁵¹ He sees Hugh of St Victor by contrast as the proponent of a version of pseudo-Dionysian symbolism.¹⁵² In the seventh book of the *Didascalion* Hugh states that the visible world is like a book written by God, created by his divine virtue, in which individual creatures are like figures.¹⁵³ As an illiterate person who looks at a book sees figures but not letters, so man sees these creatures in terms of their form (*species*) but does not understand their reason. To look at creation unknowingly is to admire only the beauty and form or appearance; to look at it wisely, or spiritually, is to probe for profound understanding of divine wisdom; scripture’s revelation completes and perfects that of the book of nature.¹⁵⁴ These two approaches are compared to admiration for the form and colour of the figures in Scripture, and praise for the meaning of the sense and signification.¹⁵⁵

When the veils of fable are viewed in pseudo-Dionysian terms, as symbols, the goal is not so much the illumination of the cosmic order as mystical theology.¹⁵⁶ The two are thus distinct, yet related, as pseudo-Dionysius and

and rends her dress, to show the poetic integument rejected in favour of theology; this garment does not deceive with artifice “nulloque sophismate visum/ decipit” (ll.304–5).

150 Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 5.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid., 59; For Hugh’s relationship to the Chartres school, see *ibid.*, 49–55.

153 Cf. Eriugena, *Periphyseon* v.3 on the capacity of all visible and corporeal things to signify something incorporeal and intelligible.

154 Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 49–52, notes Hugh’s *Expositio in Hierarchiam Coelestem* 1.1 (PL 175, 92) where God gives us two simulacra to discern things invisible: creation and the work of grace. The spectacle of the natural world cannot reward contemplation with illumination; nature demonstrates but does not illuminate, offering visible evidence but not understanding—a theme which appears in *Timaeus*. In *In Ecclesiasten homilia* 5 (PL 175, 156) to seek knowledge in the chaos of the *visibilia* is to ignore the true source of illumination within. Cf. Wetherbee, *Platonism*, 26–8, on *Didascalion* 1.2, 2.1 where philosophy, whose elements are the arts, is the wisdom which is the living mind and sole primordial Idea or pattern of things; thus the arts for Hugh restore man’s original likeness to God.

155 *Didascalion* 7, PL 176, col. 814. Hugh uses the metaphor of a lyre, figure for universal harmony, to describe the three senses of scripture (*Didascalion* 5.2, PL 176, cols. 789–90).

156 In *De sacramentis* 6 Hugh links the seven liberal arts with literal and figurative interpretation. Literal understanding involves the meaning of words, a matter which is the business of the trivium, while spiritual understanding, with its allegorical (typological) and tropological (moral) levels, concerns the meaning of things, and is linked with the quadrivium,

Eriugena spoke of the kataphatic and apophatic theologies as complementary. Nature's robe both displays her creations and veils her 'secrets'.

In fable, the soul's ascent by means of the arts or philosophy is repeatedly staged in fictive, quasi-erotic encounters with ornamental figures like Muses and other erudite nymphs or allegorical ladies.¹⁵⁷ It is worth recalling that these elaborately attired female personifications do not feature in ancient literature; the Homeric *locus classicus* for cosmic figuration is the shield of Achilles, an artefact whose description can halt the narrative movement of the epic. The gorgeous costumes of these figures, like the dress of Nature in Alan of Lille's *De planctu naturae*, allow poets to draw attention to their own elevated style as a suitable discursive means for 'cosmic' allegories.¹⁵⁸ The extent to which such allegories were erotic and decorative emerges clearly in a Renaissance parody such as the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* where the philosophical quest is debunked at the expense of the sensual elements, which become the theme of the whole fantasy.¹⁵⁹

The Renaissance sees a decline in this kind of philosophical fable, despite the recovery of Neoplatonic allegorical exegesis, Ficino's interest in pseudo-Dionysius and the production of poetic theologies by his circle and followers.¹⁶⁰

whose arts consider the form of things, and physics, which examines their nature. The seven liberal arts are subservient to divine wisdom, as inferior knowledge is ordered so as to lead to higher wisdom (PL 176, col. 185). In *Didascalion* 6 (PL 176, cols. 799–803) Hugh describes exegetical interpretation as a building process, where the literal meaning forms the foundation, and the spiritual senses the superstructure; Hugh speaks of his tropological sense as the "grace and colour" of morality. Each level of exegesis incorporates the liberal arts, and the whole is viewed in terms of the ascent from the *visibilia* to the *invisibilia* and meditations on *figura*.

157 These female personifications may compete for the philosopher-poet's attention, like Boethius' petulant literary Muses banished by Lady Philosophy (*Consolatio Philosophiae* I, 1). They can also become the subject of comic scenes, as in *De Nuptiis* II.138 when the bride Philologia is given an emetic to drink before she joins the immortals; the Arts, Disciplines and Muses rush to gather the knowledge she has vomited, which forms the content of the subsequent books on the liberal arts.

158 Dante's 'low' style marks a provocative break with this tradition. See De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, II, 269, 284 on the *Cosmographia* and *Anticlaudianus* as concerned with *ornatus*.

159 See Chapter 8.

160 For Ficino's interest in pseudo-Dionysius, see Karlfried Froehlich, "Pseudo-Dionysius and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century", in pseudo-Dionysius, *Complete Works*, 36–37. On the much-studied 'philosophy of love' produced by Ficino's followers, see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (rev. ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967); Nesca Robb, *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935);

The search for doctrines of correspondence by the Renaissance Neoplatonists often took the reconciliation between newly-discovered traditions as their object, as in Pico's use of allegories to promote his Platonic-scholastic-cabalist-hermetic syncretism in the *Conclusiones Nongentae*.¹⁶¹ Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi cantica tria* (1525) seeks to demonstrate the concord between the Jewish or Cabalistic, Christian and Platonic traditions.¹⁶² The themes of complex harmony are thus used to demonstrate the accommodation between established and 'recovered' traditions rather than to show poetry or fable as privileged expositor of the relation between nature and the arts.¹⁶³ It is telling that the 'pagan mysteries' of the Renaissance explored by Edgar Wind are often images and emblems; allegories which concern a single figure or group of figures, rather than an extended narrative. The works which show most continuity with the fable tradition appear early in the Renaissance, like Coluccio Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis*, which rehearsed the alignment of Muses, faculties, the soul, liberal arts and planets, drawing on Capella and Fulgentius.¹⁶⁴ Affirming the cosmological and symbolic role of poetry, Salutati

John Charles Nelson, *The Renaissance Theory of Love* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 1990); idem, *Humanism and Platonism in the Renaissance* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004).

- 161 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones Nongentae* (1486), ed. Albano Biondi (Florence: Olschki, 1995). The so-called "Dignity of Man" oration, written as a preface to the *Conclusiones*, sets forth the syncretic project.
- 162 Francesco Giorgi (Zorzi), *L'armonia del mondo* ed. and trans. Saverio Campiani, (Milano: Bompiani, 2010). This is not the place to explore Giorgi's striking formulation of the dyadic relation between God and matter as active and passive principles (Cant. 1, Tone 7.2). Giorgi's allegorical intent also means that he is less concerned with the beauty and amenity of the created world than its symbolic relationship with the archetypal world; see for example the Cant. 1, Tone 7, chaps 7–8 and 11–15; Giorgi does devote a chapter to *ornatus* (Cant. 3, Tone 8, Mod. 5.1–2) but it consists of exposition of the Heavenly City as Bride of the Lord in Ezekiel and John. As in Ambrose, light is linked to ornament as it makes it visible (Cant. 3, Tone 8, Mod. 6.1).
- 163 See the repeated attempts at creating systems of philosophical syncretism by the Renaissance Platonists, in the *prisca theologia* of Ficino, in Pico, in Francesco Giorgi, Symphorien Champier, Agostino Steuco's *Philosophia perennis* (1540) and Francesco Patrizi.
- 164 Salutati, *De laboribus Herculis*, 1.10, ed. Berthold Ullman (Zurich: Thesaurus Mundi, 1951). Incomplete at Salutati's death in 1406, the work developed from 1383–1391 from an epistle on Seneca's *Hercules furens* into a four book study of Hercules, Book 1 containing a defence of poetry. See Berthold Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963); Ronald Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works and Thought*

speaks of it as “adorning the excellence of creation and especially man” and “acclaiming divine things and in the praises of the indescribable deity”.¹⁶⁵ *De laboribus* followed allegorical traditions in proffering etymology as the key to figurative meaning, but its selection of Hercules as protagonist has been read as a sign of Humanist concerns with active life and voluntarism.¹⁶⁶

Salutati's presentation of poetry as a *summa* of the other arts and its association with theology appears also in Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* 14.¹⁶⁷ We might however detect a shift of emphasis; the ‘theological’ character claimed by early Humanist defences of poetry such as Boccaccio's *Genealogia*, Albertino Mussato's epistles (1315–16), Francesco da Fiano's 1404 *Contra ridiculos oblocutores et fellitos detractores poetarum*, (*Against the Ridiculous Gainsayers and Gall-ridden Disparagers of the Poets*) is associated with poetry's origins and allegorical mode, and the question of what it communicates retreats correspondingly.¹⁶⁸ When Petrarch in *Senilium* XV.11 and

of Coluccio Salutati (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983). On alignments of Muses, planets and faculties, see Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 265–69, on the diagram of Guillaume de Signerre illustrating Franchinus Gafurius's *Practica Musica*, 1496 (reused in his 1500 *De Harmonia Instrumentum Opus*); Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 170–74, 184–85, on Salutati's refutation of celestial harmony in *De laboribus* 1.9. Gafurius drew his correspondence between the planets, tones, modes and Muses from the fifteenth century musicologist, Ramos de Pareja who set them alongside the humours and elements in *Musica Practica* (1482); Gafurius described the correspondences between the planets and the angelic orders in *Theoricum Opus* (1480).

- 165 Salutati, *De lab.*, 1.3 “excellentiam creaturarum et presertim hominum prosequi et commendationem divinarum rerum ac inenarrabilis deitatis laudibus adhiberi”.
- 166 On Hercules as paradigm of moral action, dominated by will, and Salutati's theological and philosophical concerns with voluntarism, see Charles Trinkaus, *In our Image and Likeness* (London: Constable Press, 1970), I, 51–102; *ibid.*, II, 697–704; Grassi, *Renaissance Humanism*, 32–33; Concetta Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics 1250–1500* (London: Associated University Presses: Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981), 146–67.
- 167 For poetry as *summa* of the other liberal arts, see Salutati, *De lab.*, 1.3; for its ‘theological’ character, *ibid.*, 1.2: “sublimius et perfectius poema non sit quam divina scriptura”; “there is no more sublime and perfect poem than divine scripture”. Earlier presentations of poetry as containing features of all the liberal arts appear in the Prologue to *Anticlaudianus*. In *Genealogia* XIV.7–8 Boccaccio speaks of theology as the poetry of God, of Orpheus, Linus and Musaeus as the “primi theologi”, of the origins of poetry in prophecy, of poetry as divinely inspired speech and as a veil or *integumentum*.
- 168 See Greenfield, *Poetics*, 28, 44, 67, on the distinction between a Humanist understanding of a theologian as a poet who reveals mystical truths through allegory versus a Scholastic understanding of the theologian as an “investigator of theological truths related to the interpretation of Scripture”. On Fiano, see *ibid.*, 168–77. Boccaccio's presentation of

Salutati speak of poetry as above or compounded from all the liberal arts, or Mussato insists that all the sciences are included in poetry, they stress poetry as container and mode, rather than content.¹⁶⁹ In Salutati, the relation with theology as the higher discourse is based on the notion of the veil while the exalted role of figured speech with its innumerable similitudes in communicating the incommunicable means that correct interpretation is guided by providence.¹⁷⁰ In contrast to the Platonic relation between dialectic and myth Salutati denigrates dialectic as verbal trickery.¹⁷¹ Boccaccio's presentation of his treatise as a mythological manual, with an array of former gods now serving as allegories suggests a series of ready-made figures to be inserted, a tendency which will become more notable in subsequent Renaissance mythography. The cultivation of the poet as triumphal figure, which becomes central to defences of poetry from Mussato on, also privileged the notion that poetry, which confers fame, is epideictic in content. As Struever suggested, the early Humanists' interest in poetry and figurative language did not concern *figura* as a metaphysical integument but as central to historical renewal, concerned with "the creation of similitude, the attribution of analogous meaning" rather than with cosmic forces or poetic universality.¹⁷²

the gods does follow a cosmic scheme, starting with Demogorgon and Chaos and moving through the gods which pertain to the elements and world's habitats; the work was often published with Boccaccio's topographic encyclopaedia, *De montibus*.

- 169 Petrarch, *Rerum senilium XII–XV*, ed. Elvira Nota, trans. Jean-Yves Boriaud (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006), 404–09, letter to Benvenuto da Imola on whether poetry is a liberal art. Petrarch denies this but says it is above the arts or embraces them, perfecting and adorning the *inchoatum* placed by the liberal arts in the mind. Petrarch displaces the criticisms of poetry, like those made by Philosophy in Boethius, onto playwrights. See Salutati, *De lab.* 1.3.9 for discussion of poetic modes of signification; Mussato, Epistle 18, col. 60 quoted in Greenfield, *Poetics*, 84.
- 170 On the innumerable character of similitudes, see *De lab.*, 11.2.16. On the role of providence in scriptural interpretation, see Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*.
- 171 At *De lab.*, 1.10.19 dialectic is relegated in the sphere of Mercury, god of thieves and salesmen.
- 172 Struever, *Language of History*, 47, 60, 88, 99–100 et passim.

Rhetoric and Illusion

The Sophists

In this chapter we consider how ornament developed in the rhetorical tradition, with its sophistic origins.¹ We shall see how sophistic scepticism about the existence or knowledge of forms or essences raises the question of the cosmetic and of manipulation of appearances (*phantasia*) for purposes of persuasion. Within a sophistic and rhetorical approach to ornament, appearance is all-important, as displayed by rhetorical discussion on the enhancement of the surface of speech. The most compelling quality of appearance is the illusion of liveliness, and within the rhetorical tradition liveliness will be exalted as the greatest praise of ornament. This is a consistent theme, from Aristotle's comments on the actuality or *energeia* of metaphor in *Rhetoric* 111.11.1–3, 1411b–1412b to *ekphraseis* of the Second Sophistic, such as the *Imagines* of Philostratus, Elder and Younger, and the *Descriptions* of Callistratus.² The ultimate origin

- 1 The treatment here is focussed on rhetorical ornament, not a wider discussion of rhetoric in general. For general studies see inter alia George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); idem, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Marc Fumaroli, *L'Âge de l'éloquence: rhétorique et «res literaria» de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Geneva: Droz, 1980); Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); on the sophists, Jaeger, *Paideia* I, 283–328; idem, *Paideia* 111, *The Conflict of Cultural Ideals in the Age of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944); Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*; Robert Wardy, *The Birth of Rhetoric: Gorgias, Plato and Their Successors* (London: Routledge, 1996). For the early use of sophist to mean a teacher or poet, see W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 29–30, 35 on *Protagoras* 316d where Protagoras claims that the ancient poets were Sophists. Guthrie suggests that by the fifth century the term starts to be used more of prose writers; see *ibid.*, 27–34, 176–225, on the Sophists in the classical period. See Jaeger, *Paideia* I, 293, on the Sophists' inheritance of the educational traditional of the poets; idem, *Paideia* 11, 107–124, on sophistic *paideia*. For anthologies of the Sophists' writings, see *Sofisti: Testimonianze e frammenti*, ed. Mario Untersteiner (Milan: Bompiano, 2009), 65–69; *The Greek Sophists*, trans. with introduction and notes by John Dillon and Tania Gergel (London: Penguin, 2003).
- 2 The Second Sophistic is generally seen as emerging in the second half of the first century CE and reaching its high point in second-early third century; the term “Second Sophistic” was coined by Flavius Philostratus in *Lives of the Sophists* and resuscitated in late nineteenth century Germany by Edwin Rohde; see Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford

of discussions of illusion in Renaissance literary theory and art criticism lies in the sophist's fantastic, cosmetic representations, which Plato links memorably with scenography and optical illusion in art (*Sophist* 236a–c).³ There is a line of thought from antiquity which identifies such illusionist liveliness with the artist's licence or freedom of fantasy.⁴

The sophist whose name is most linked with rhetoric, Gorgias (c. 483/2–374/3 BCE), opens his *Encomium on Helen* with a contrast between *kosmos* and its opposite, disarray (*akosmia*):

The adornment [*kosmos*] of a city, is manpower,
of a body, beauty,
of a soul, wisdom,
of an action, virtue,
of a speech, truth;
and the opposites of these make for disarray [*akosmia*].
Man and woman and speech and deed and city and object
should be honoured, if praiseworthy, with praise
and incur, if unworthy, blame,

University Press, 2005), 4–10. Philostratus distinguished Second Sophistic as a literary movement, derived from Aeschines, from the “philosophical rhetoric” of the first sophists such as Gorgias; see G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 8–9. On relations between Flavius Philostratus and the Philostrati who authored the *Imagines*, see *ibid.*, 2–6. On Second Sophistic, see Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire. Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World, AD 50–250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); *Philostratus*, Ewan Bowie and Jás Elsner eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Graham Anderson, *Philostratus: Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century AD* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); *Athenaeus and his world: reading Greek culture in the Roman Empire*, David Braund and John Wilkins eds. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000); Maud Gleason, *Making men. Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Menander Rhetor, *Treatises*, edited and translated with a commentary by D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Wardy, *The Birth of Rhetoric*.

- 3 Gianni Carchia, *La favola dell'essere. Commento al Sofista* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 1997), 48–57, notes that sophistic does not engage with the experience of the world but rather proposes a dream-like, mythical or illusory universe, enchanted by appearances and that the Neoplatonic tradition insisted on the “pseudo-demiurgic” character of sophistic imitation. For Second Sophistic as an artistic movement, whose great exemplars are Hadrian's Villa and the Baths of Caracalla, see Jás Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), esp. 4–8, 169–97.
- 4 See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 18, 42–55, 96, 128–43, 167.

for it is an equal error and mistake
to blame the praiseable and to praise the blameable.⁵

Gorgias' *kosmos-akosmia* contrast reflects the philosophical preoccupation with contrariety as the source of ordering we saw in Chapter 1. It also suggests a sense of *kosmos* which appears in Parmenides frag. 8, where the goddess Justice refers to "learn[ing] mortal opinions by listening to the deceptive *kosmos* of my words", which Wardy discusses as an ordered, harmonious fabrication.⁶ This contrast sets up the ordered pattern which frames or contains the subsequent speech. However, rather than recounting a cosmogony or theogony, what follows is a demonstration of rhetoric's capacity to make the weaker argument appear the stronger and hence show the relative and temporary nature of truth.⁷ The illusion created by art was for Gorgias praiseworthy, as in the remark recorded in Plutarch *De glor. Ath.*, 348c on tragedy that he who practises deception is more just than he who does not, and he who yields to deception is wiser than he who does not.⁸ *Helen* shows Gorgias' innovation in using poetic devices of meter and figures of repetition to make prose arguments more persuasive.⁹ This innovation was criticised sharply within the subsequent rhetorical tradition, especially by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who makes him the

5 *Encomium on Helen*, 1, in *The Greek Sophists*, trans. with introduction and notes by John Dillon and Tania Gergel (London: Penguin, 2003), following the translators' punctuation and layout. All translations from Gorgias' *Helen* are from this edition. For discussion of *Helen* see Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 25–51; Arthur Adkins, "Form and Content in Gorgias' *Helen* and *Palamedes*: Rhetoric, Philosophy, Inconsistency, and Invalid Argument in Some Greek Thinkers", in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* 11, ed. John Peter Anton and Anthony Preus (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1983), 107–28. On the interpretative traditions on Gorgias and *Helen* as a parody, see Scott P. Consigny, *Gorgias, sophist and artist* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2001), 31, 173–4.

6 Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 11–13.

7 For Protagoras' claim to teach both sides of an argument and bolster the weaker argument to seem stronger, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1402a23; Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Protagoras A21 and C2; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 1X.51. Protagoras wrote two books of contrary arguments (*Antilogiai*); see Diogenes Laertius 1X.55.

8 Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, frag. B23.

9 See Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 40, on Plato's *Menexenus* 239c for the earliest allusion to prose as *logos psilos*—logos bare of metre. Untersteiner, *I sofisti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1949), 125 ff., reads Gorgias in the light of Pindar and the tragedians, seeing in *Helen* a doctrine of knowledge derived from a tragic view of the spirit (*Sofisti*, 159, 173–77, 214, 231). Untersteiner associates the trickery of art with its idealisation, to which Gorgias alludes at *Helen* 18; art provides particular and universal knowledge, the latter consisting in art's recognition of the irrationality of things (ibid., 226–27). Philostratus regarded Gorgias as father of the sophistic movement

progenitor of the vices of ornate style: frigidity, juvenility, bombast, empty and overwrought ostentation.¹⁰ In short, *Helen* shows rhetoric framed by reference to the universality of the contraries from which order and patterning arises.

In *Helen*, what is stressed is not the continuum of ordering, but the appearance of praiseworthy qualities, which are distinct in different things. In calling *kosmos* the quality which makes a thing praiseworthy, Gorgias lies at the head of a long rhetorical tradition which understands ornament as the illumination of 'praise' effected by eloquent speech. Cicero puts it succinctly: "as *ingenium* is the ornament of man, so eloquence is the light of *ingenium* itself".¹¹ Walter Ong noted this usage of ornament as 'praise' when he observed that rhetorical treatises conceive 'praise' as emanating from a thing.¹²

The verbal means used to make 'praise' evident are also called ornaments—the poetic modes of speech employed by Gorgias and the rhythmic devices, tropes and figures which are subsequently taxonomised.¹³ The blurring between means of representation and the thing represented by the rhetoric of praise is already apparent in Gorgias' *Helen*. Unlike Cicero in *De oratore* and Plato in *Gorgias*, Gorgias is not concerned with the harmony of universal order but the power of speech: he says ominously "The mode of persuasion is in no way like that of necessity, but its power is the same" (*Helen* 11). All speech is for Gorgias opinion, be it the investigations of astronomers, verbal contests "written with art but not spoken with truth" or the "struggles" of philosophic arguments, where speed of thought enacts the swift change of belief (*Helen* 13). Gorgias' vision of persuasion has two aspects important for ornament; the

in his stylistic techniques, improvisation and political exhortations to Panhellenism (*Lives of the Sophists* 1. 9. 492–3), a claim repeated in the entry on Gorgias in the *Suda*.

10 See Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III.1.9, 1404a, III.3.1 (Diels-Kranz, *Fragmente*, A23) on Gorgias' use of tragic language, both appropriate and inappropriate or frigid. For a negative assessment of his 'dithyrambic' speech, see Diodorus Siculus, *Universal History*, XII.53.1–5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lysias* 3; *Isocrates* 2; *Demosthenes* 4, 5, 25, 29; Cicero, *Brutus* 174–6, where Cicero uses *festivitates* to render Gorgias' *poikiliai*. Dillon and Gergel arrange *Helen* in "quasi-poetical form, by dividing it according to clausulae, to give some impression of the effect of the original" and to show that "Gorgias is creating here a literary form somewhere between prose and verse, as the Greeks themselves appreciated" (*Sophists*, 66–67).

11 "ut enim hominis decus ingenium, sic ingeni ipsius lumen est eloquentia", *Brutus* 15.59. In the same passage Cicero refers to the man who discovered eloquence as "outstanding in excellence" and a "flower of the people". Cf. Plato, *Menexenus* 236e on the "finely spoken words" which give fame (*mnēmē*) and *kosmos* to doers by hearers. The passage is quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in *Demosthenes* 25 as an instance in his view of Plato's lapses into Gorgianic vulgarity.

12 Ong, *Ramus*, 277–78.

13 Gorgias speaks in *Helen* 8 of all poetry as "speech possessing metre".

uniqueness of rhetorical praise emphasises Gorgias' anti-essentialism—there is no 'virtue', only the virtues represented as praiseworthy 'ornaments' revealed by encomium. Second, the effects of "Speech . . . a powerful lord, who with the finest and most invisible body achieves the most divine works" are likened to those of sight, which creates love or terror and to the effects of the inner senses, in particular the "lingering" images of imagination which are explicitly compared to the memory of things said.¹⁴ Thus Gorgias speaks in *Helen* 8 of *logos* as banishing fear and grief, of fostering joy and compassion.¹⁵ He also notes at 18 the delight created by pleasing images and sights, which work on us to persuade and make us yield.¹⁶ Such delight is also produced by incantations, which come together with opinion in the psyche, to enchant, persuade and change it by trickery or sorcery (*goētia*).¹⁷

Speech works on the fantasy and its persuasive, affective force is independent of truth content: "All who have and do persuade people of things do so by moulding a false argument" (*Helen* 11).¹⁸ The grand invocation of *kosmos* in a city, a body, the soul, action and speech is exploited cosmetically, as a rhetorical showpiece; the manipulation of argument and style to make Helen appear blameless does not show the harmony and order of universal justice.¹⁹ The grand opening contrast of *kosmos* and *akosmia* degenerates into a series of rhyming contrasts or items.²⁰ Gorgias, at the beginning of the sophistic teaching of rhetoric, exemplifies the cosmetic use of ornament to embellish and give allure to what is weak, unjust or deficient. Such allure, as Plato's *Gorgias* insists, will be most powerful on the populace swayed by appearances, sensual

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- 14 *Helen* 8, 17. Gorgias at *Helen* 10 compares speech to love and magic; for later discussions of the psychagogic character of poetry, see Kathryn Gutzwiller, "Literary Criticism", in *A companion to Hellenistic literature* James J. Clauss and Martine Cuypers eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 337–65, esp. 340–42, on psychagogic entertainment as the leading of the soul as in necromancy versus the didactic nature of prose as *didaskalia*. Gutzwiller notes the psychagogic/*didaskalia* distinction as established by the time of Theophrastus; see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Lysias* 14.1; Strabo 1.1.10.
 - 15 Gorgias, frag. 11, 290 Diels. See Guthrie, *Sophists* 180 for discussion.
 - 16 Noted in Pollitt, *Ancient View of Greek Art*, 51.
 - 17 *Helen*, 10. Gorgias gives errors of mind and deceptions of opinion as two *technai* of wizardry and magic.
 - 18 Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 27–8, where the Muses—whose task is praise—can speak of things true and untrue.
 - 19 Gorgias ends by saying that he created *Helen* as an exercise and entertainment.
 - 20 See Plato's imitation of Gorgias' stylistic effects, or affectations, in *Gorgias* 467c. For condemnation of Gorgias' affected use of parallelism and antithesis, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Demosthenes*, where imitation of "Gorgianic histrionics" is said to have misled Thucydides, Isocrates and Plato as stylists.

delight or emotional affect.²¹ It is in response to Gorgias that we find negative accounts of ornament, at two levels; as superficial, deceitful lure and as bad style, theatrical ostentation which leaves its audience cold. The second criticism is voiced by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who regards Plato himself—the most authoritative philosophical critic of sophistic rhetoric—as enticed by the showy, over-embellished Gorgianic style.²²

Gorgias' presentation of embellishment finds its justification in the subjective nature of knowledge claimed by Protagoras and Gorgias and the related claim that only through teaching an art of argument can social goods accrue.²³ Both Gorgias and Protagoras expressed scepticism about the possibility of knowing truth, Protagoras in his uncompromising claim, reported by Plato and Sextus Empiricus, that what appears (*phainesthai* or *phantasia*) to each person, *is* to that person.²⁴ The centrality of human opinion which Protagoras extolled in his famous dictum that "man is the measure of all things" is opinion concerning appearances and our judgement of them.²⁵

21 *Gorgias* 502d.

22 *Demosthenes* 5–6, 23–32. Dionysius criticises *Phaedrus* for its "dithyrambic" bombast, although he approves of the early part of the dialogue, concerning a speech by Lysias, Dionysius' model for Attic lucidity. Dionysius ignores that his reading of *Phaedrus* creates a tension between style and content, with its profound critique of the means and claims of sophistic rhetoric.

23 Protagoras was supposedly the first to distinguish the modes or moods of speech and to allocate genders to nouns, as parodied in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. See Struever, *Language of History*, 11, on Gorgias and sophistic: "Stylistic has its basis in the axiom that meaning in human experience can only be apprehended and communicated aesthetically".

24 *Theaetetus*, 151e–152e, *Euthydemus* 286c; Sextus Empiricus *Against the Mathematicians* VII.60–64; VII.388–90; idem *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I.216–219. See Dillon and Gergel, *Sophists*, 1–21, for the texts on appearance and the denial of contradiction; for Plato's terminology, Jacques Follon, "La notion de *phantasia* chez Platon", in *De la Phantasia à l'Imagination*, 1–14. Guthrie, *Sophists*, 182, discusses Aristotle's comments in *Metaphysics* 1007b18 and 1009a6 on the denial of the law of contradiction attributed to Protagoras, which implies that it is impossible to speak falsely, as everything must be simultaneously true and false. Gorgias composed a treatise entitled *On Nature* or *On the Non-existent*, where he set out to abolish or parody Parmenides' conception of being as one, unchanging and timeless by demonstrating that it is as easy to demonstrate non-being as being. The work is paraphrased by Sextus Empiricus, and by pseudo-Aristotle in *On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias*; see Guthrie, *Sophists*, 192–99; Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885), I, 137–42; Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 14–24.

25 Protagoras, fr. 1 Diels. The statement formed the opening of his work *Truth*, otherwise known as *Kataballontes* ("Overthrowing", a metaphor from wrestling). See Guthrie, *Sophists* 184–88, for interpretations of Protagoras' view of perceptions as realities.

The Sophists' scepticism concerning knowledge and definition deepens into philosophical discussion, with figures such as Cratylus, who decided that to utter any statement about anything is to affirm that it is (*Cratylus*, 429d) or Antisthenes who declared that contradiction was impossible since there can only be one *logos* for each thing (e.g. "man is man", not "man is good") and different predications about a thing are impossible; there is no concept of an essence plus non-essential attribute (e.g. educated Socrates, white Socrates).²⁶ To Antisthenes is also attributed the anti-teleological, anti-essential view that elements and entities cannot be defined, only named, or described analogically, so that our knowledge of things comes to no more than a list of names enumerating the parts of composite things.²⁷ Antisthenes' position has been summarised as a confusion between essential and accidental predication and between common and proper names.²⁸

What unites the views of Antisthenes or Cratylus with the latter's opponent in *Cratylus*, the Protagorean Hermogenes, who views all names as arbitrary, is the lack of a notion of form or essence (man, horse) which is qualified by attributes (tall, white, etc.). Scepticism concerning the existence of definable essence leads to identification of being with appearance, the reduction of definition to tautology ("man is man") or analogical naming ("a donkey is like a horse"). For our purposes, the point of such assertions lies in their rhetorical possibilities; as Plato complained in *Phaedrus* 267a, Gorgian rhetoric is concerned not with what is, but with what is likely. The sophistic argument that things are known only as they present to us in certain conditions, as appearances (*phantasia* and related terms), leads to an emphasis on particularity, undermines the distinction between real or unreal, and rejects the idea of things as a composite of essence plus accidental qualities. Rhetorical application of the last point implies that whatever argument the sophist or rhetor dresses up, it will be perceived by its audience as though the argument and its persuasive style were a unity. This appears in the way that rhetorical descriptions of style slide from style as dress to style as the face or surface of speech. Colour, a favoured rhetorical term for ornament of speech, also holds

Cornford in *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London: Kegan Paul, 1935), 34 ff. contended that Protagoras is arguing that the senses were trustworthy (against Parmenides and the Eleatics) and that opposite qualities may co-exist in matter. Guthrie discounts Cornford's reading (*Sophists*, 185–86).

26 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1024bff, discussed in Guthrie *Sophists*, 210–11.

27 Ibid., 212–13, on Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1043b. Antisthenes was the teacher of Diogenes and thus came to be regarded as the father of the Cynic school.

28 F. Caizzi, "Antistene", *Studi Urbinati* 1–2 (1964), 34, in Guthrie, *Sophists*, 215.

the ambiguity that it cannot be prescinded from perception, so that we see an object and its colour together, although it may be applied cosmetically to things.²⁹

If all we can say about things is how they appear to us, as phantasms, if there is no means of distinguishing real from unreal appearances, if things can only be perceived in particular contexts, if there is no distinction between essence and attribute—then questions of illusion and cosmetic deceit become pressing. As the theme of a rhetorical show piece, Gorgias' selection of Helen, whose lovely appearance belies the catastrophe she provokes, seems hardly casual.³⁰ She is the emblem for an art of speech marked by the disjunction of appearances and essence—or the denial of essence.

Gorgias' *Helen* shows the ordering of artifice as a conscious manipulation to create an illusion. Discussions of art as the production of illusion appear in Plato's critique of art and poetry in *Republic* x where they are called *phainomena* (596e) and phantasms (598b). In *Sophist* 235d–236c comes the distinction between eikastic and fantastic mimesis, the first signifying reproductions which are other than but like their objects, such as a statue which reproduces the proportions of the thing it imitates. If Plato insists that the maker should take as a model that which is always the same (*Timaeus* 28a–b), the enterprise of Renaissance figurative art to represent things whose movement (i.e. change) is the sign of their life and the core of their affective force, is contrary to Plato. Renaissance attempts to assert the inspired nature of the artist, who imitates things from their intellectual forms, must be juxtaposed to the non-Platonic engagement with movement and actuality, which point to Aristotelian and sophistic influence.³¹

In *Sophist*, fantastic mimesis by contrast refers to illusion, scenographic depiction and optical correction, so that stage sets appear real, or adjustment of measures so that statues seen at a height appear to have correct proportions. Fantastic mimesis in short refers to painting in perspective as well as adjustment to conditions of viewing and techniques of relief which give the appearance of liveliness. Such illusionism as practised in *skiagraphia*, modelling through the blending of dark and light tones, was similarly derided

29 On colour as a term of rhetorical ornament, see Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 47–48.

30 Cf. Pandora as described by Hesiod in *Theogony*, another sinister 'gift' from the gods. Like a rhetorical argument, Pandora is adorned to sway and deceive men with her appearance. Her crown, embossed with creatures which appear "like living things, with voices" is an early description of 'lively' ornament; its figurations are termed *daidala* (*Theog.*, 581–84).

31 Such attempts drew on Cicero, *Orator* 2.8–3.10 and *Enneads* I.6.2 and V.8.1 on the artist's imitation of the forms.

in *Republic* 602c–d as exploiting our weak nature with trickery, like sorcery.³² The related kind of illusionism founded on optical correction was scenography (*skēnographia*) which Polybius also likened to epideictic rhetoric, closely associated with sophistry.³³ When sophistic artifice revives as Hellenic *belles lettres* with the Second Sophistic, ekphrastic literature, such as the *Imagines* of the Philostrati or the *Descriptions* of Callistratus, shows aesthetic criticism focused on illusion and subjective affect.

At the inception of the sophistic tradition, *Helen* displays the intent to make the weaker argument the stronger or the cosmetic ordering of sophistic rhetoric, where a persuasive surface floats over scepticism concerning the existence, knowledge or definition of entities. The enclosing reference to the contrast or patterning between *kosmos* and *akosmia* in universal ordering as in the works of human art and artifice therefore seems disingenuous, given sophistic contributions to the *nomos-physis* debate and its denial of the continuity between universal and social order; in that debate, as teachers of virtue, sophists such as Protagoras ranged themselves on the side of *nomos*.³⁴ By contrast, in Plato's *Gorgias*, the ordering that characterises the works of nature and art concerns their participation in justice and harmony.

Plato on Rhetoric

Plato's *Gorgias* contains an unsympathetic formulation of the rhetorician as a man who by a knack of persuasion, based on mere opinion, may appear to the ignorant crowd to know more than the man who is truly skilled and learned.³⁵ Rhetoric is linked with sophistry, cookery and personal adornment as the false

32 Discussed in Pollitt, *Ancient View*, 44–5. The “weakness in our nature” exploited by *skiagraphia* is presumably a reference to the so-called fallacies of sight which lead us to confuse appearance and reality, or lead us to misleading inferences. Plato's other references to *skiagraphia* describe deception, wrong opinion or unclear understanding: *Rep.* 365c, 523b, 583b, 586b, 602d; *Critias* 107c–d; *Laws* 663b; *Phaedo* 69b (Pollitt, *Ancient View*, 217–18).

33 Polybius 12.28a says that history is to epideictic as real buildings are to objects which appear (*phainomenōn*) in scene painting; see Pollitt, *Ancient View*, 230. Pollitt quotes Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* vii.88 on the scepticism of Anaxarchus and Monimus who abolished the criterion for truth and likened existing things to scene painting, or things experienced in sleep or madness (*ibid.*, 231).

34 For an overview, see Guthrie, *Sophists*, 55–77.

35 *Gorgias* 295e. At 521d Socrates says that were he to be put on trial, it would be like the trial of a doctor by a bench of children in the charge of a cook. For Plato's treatment of rhetoric, see Jaeger, *Paideia* II, 126–59; III, Chapters 8–10; Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 52–85.

habitudes (*emperia*) of flattery which aim at pleasure and attempt to usurp the true arts (*technē*) which aim at the good—the political arts of justice and legislation for the soul and medicine and gymnastic for the body.

The sustained analogy between the varieties of skilled work leads Socrates to the assertion that art—*technē*—is what gives order, regularity and form to the thing worked on, be it a ship, a body or the soul (503c–508b). This important discussion insists that the virtue in a thing consists in its regularity (*taxis*) and orderly arrangement (*kosmos*), and that the presence of these qualities in the soul makes a person law abiding and temperate. At 506e Socrates sets forth the view that “it is a certain order (*kosmos tis*) proper to each existent thing that by its advent in each makes it good”, and in the soul such “orderly order” is temperance, in which other virtues such as piety, bravery and justice have their basis.³⁶ At 507e–508 this order is extended to the universe itself, since heaven and earth, the gods and men are held together through communion, friendship (*philia*), orderliness (*kosmiotes*), temperance and justice, and whoever overlooks this fails to perceive the “great power of geometric equality”, in the human as in the divine realm. In discussion of decorum in *De officiis* 1, Cicero develops this association of temperance with the harmonious order which forms the virtue within particular things, as well as the quality which determines universal relationships. The structures of order which for Plato may be revealed only through a process of intellectual argument are for Cicero disclosed as they arise in concrete situations, in keeping with Cicero’s criticism of philosophical retirement from public life.

The corollary of flattery and rhetoric as the perversion of justice in *Gorgias* is political despotism, and as the dialogue progresses, the theme moves from persuasion to the acquisition of power and the advocacy of the supremacy of force by Callicles (481c ff.). The theme of the persuasion of the mass is thus related to power as the end of persuasion—the shared, social character of language, in which Cicero recognises the fundamental principle of human communities, is in negative assessments of rhetoric an instrument of manipulation, which exploits the ignorance of the populace through flattery or displays of pathos.³⁷

Plato’s other dialogue on rhetoric, *Phaedrus*, instead takes place at an unusual distance from civic life, in an idyllic setting which had immense influence on later poetic literature, and it treats of a different aspect of persuasion

36 The tortuous translation, which follows the syntax of the Greek, is that of W.R.M. Lamb, Loeb ed., 1975.

37 Poetry fares still worse in *Gorgias*, representing a form of demagogic flattery lower than rhetoric.

to the demagogic techniques deplored in *Gorgias*. It gives a virtuoso depiction of eloquence as inspired speech and postulates a true art of rhetoric based on dialectical method, founded on the knowledge of the soul. The depiction of *enthusiasmos* in Socrates's palinode on the soul and its ascent to the divine is of such lyrical force that *Phaedrus* became in the Renaissance a *locus classicus* for discussions of poetic inspiration and defence.³⁸ Thus the outline for a reformed rhetoric subordinate to dialectic in *Phaedrus* is transformed in the later works it inspired (amongst them *De oratore*) into an argument for the primacy of ornate speech, in which Socrates's dialectical vision of the union of argument and form becomes inverted into an apology for the inspired nature of eloquence as the *vis divina* of human discourse.

One of the distinguishing features of *Phaedrus* is its variety, with the progression of the arguments about persuasion and love represented in a sequence of literary displays which starts with Lysias' letter, not unlike a *thesis* such as a teacher of rhetoric might set as a student exercise.³⁹ The letter is followed by Socrates's initial rebuttal, then by his palinode on the four varieties of *theia mania*, divine madness, culminating with the rational arguments at the end of the work, which put forward a philosophical programme for an art of speaking which produces conviction in the soul, and meditate on the relation of speaking to writing.

Each of these three arguments concerns speech and persuasion in a different aspect. First comes the manipulative rhetorical persuasion of Lysias' letter, with its false argument which 'proves' the superiority of sexual cynicism over love. Next is the persuasion of the palinode, which bases its 'truth' not in reason but in supra-rational *enthusiasmos* (whose claims Plato treats with more circumspection in *Ion*) and whose efficacy lies in its figurative language and affective power, its *pathos*. Finally there is the dialectical procedure, founded on reason and concerned with knowledge (*epistēmē*) rather than opinion or pathos. At the centre of the dialogue is the question of the relation of the poetic content of the palinode to the dialectical method expounded in the

38 Renaissance defences of poetry which reiterate the setting of *Phaedrus* include Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, Fracastoro's *Naugerius*, the *Discorsi Filosofiques* of Pontus de Tyard, and poetic renderings of philosophical discourse like the *De summo bono* of Lorenzo de' Medici. On the topos as place, argument and image, and the play between these various senses, see E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1953); Terry Comito, *The Idea of the Garden in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1978).

39 On the *thesis* as rhetorical exercise, see Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 11.4.24.

third part of the work. Socrates presents his own speech as a playful composition, embellished for the ears of the credulous Phaedrus, while stressing that it does exhibit the characteristics of a reasoned speech—it both gathers together particulars to express one idea, and divides up arguments according to their classes (265d–266b).

As Socrates's argument for a true art of speech progresses, we see that what the palinode has taken for its subject—the nature and parts of the soul, its capacity to be moved and its illumination through ensouled knowledge, corresponds to the method expounded for philosophical rhetoric based in dialectic, based not only on knowledge of the matter of which one speaks, but of the nature of the soul and the kind of speech suitable to it. Understanding of the soul, in short, is both the subject of the palinode and the theoretical basis of the art of speaking, while love, the other subject of the palinode, is the most powerful conceivable form of persuasion or pathos. Gorgias presented these psychagogic themes in *Helen*, but Plato handles them to show the affective ornaments of speech controlled by the dialectical armature of the argument. The palinode may be playful, as Socrates says all writing should be, but its relationship with the theoretical discussion of speech is serious—a discourse on *enthusiasmos*, which presents itself as a creation of radical unreason—of *theia mania*—is also an exemplar of the reasoned art of speaking.

If the proper procedures of definition and division of arguments are observed, the nature of the soul of the listener is understood, and the speech accordingly adorned, the discourse will possess such order and unity that it may seem like the inspired, “mantic” speech in which form and content are one. Thus Socrates's ‘true’ rhetoric is not a kind of bald dialectic, but a discourse of reason in the soul and directed to the soul, whose aspirations to knowledge are such that it can take on the inspired form of vatic speech. Such philosophic rhetoric can turn the persuasive potential of figurative language away from the abusers of speech, the sophists, rhetors and rhapsodes, to the rational discourse of the philosopher, which lives in constant dialogue with other arguments. It is on this note of the relation of inner to outer that the dialogue concludes, with Socrates praying for the last time to the gods of the place that they grant him beauty of soul, and that his external possessions may be in harmony with his inner self; the themes of sacred invocation, the nature of the soul and the relationship of external and internal fundamental to the arts of speech are thus drawn to a close.

Aristotle and Rhetoric

In *Phaedrus*, ornament is not so much pre-dialectical patterning as the embellishment which goes on after dialectical argument. The separable character of ornament finds further theoretical basis with the appearance of a metaphysics focused on the relation between essential and accidental determinations, with Aristotle. Aristotle's view of the universe as eternal and ungenerated entailed a rejection of cosmogony as a valid principle of scientific explanation; there is not a search for beginnings but for principles of movement and change postulated through the dyads of form-matter, actuality-potentiality and his system of causation.⁴⁰ We noted above that Aristotle addresses the question of change via the postulation of substance as hylomorphic, compounded of form and matter; matter as principle of potentiality and indeterminacy provides the unchanging substrate which allows forms to alter. Such change could be substantial, e.g. life to death or accidental, e.g. a change of posture or colour. Aristotle locates contrariety in change, like the qualitative change from hot to cold. Contrariety is thus located in hylomorphic substances, not in the cosmogonic proportioning of elements or qualities. When Aristotle discusses actuality (*energeia*) as a property of metaphor in *Rhetoric* III.11, since it renders inanimate things animate and vice versa, there is an allusion to substantial change and alteration between contraries. This should be kept in mind given the Renaissance conception of rhetorical *energeia* as a stylistic ornament. The 'ornament' in this proportioning of contraries is however located within an individual substance, not in an analogical relation to universal ordering.

Aristotle's formulation of multiple causes (material, formal, efficient and final) as the means of definition associates essence with the formal and especially final cause. Accident, by contrast, concerns the qualifications of a thing which are inessential and complete the description of its appearance in given circumstances. The essential-accidental distinction provides an intellectual framework to consider the superficial, fleeting or apparent; essence by contrast presupposes a form and an end. Thus in *De partibus animalium* 1.5, 645a Aristotle speaks of beauty as the fitness of an element of the body to carry

40 See Kahn, *Anaximander*, 210, on Aristotle's rejection of cosmogony; at *De partibus animalium* 640a11–19 Aristotle remarks that earlier philosophers investigated the starting point of things, and the process of becoming rather than their end; he contends "the process [*genesis*] is for the sake of the substance [*ousia*], the substance is not for the sake of the process".

out its function, a functional conception which will reappear in Renaissance aesthetics, used for example by Vincenzo Danti in his discussion of qualitative proportion.⁴¹

The accidental is a means of explaining why individual things appear different from other things of the same species, or why the same thing may appear different at different times, offering a way out of the relativism and subjectivism of the Sophists. Judgement governs the calculative, deliberative arts of the practical intelligence, divided by Aristotle into ethical action (*praxis*) and making (*poiesis*) whose rational activity is art, *technē*.⁴² The rationality of art elevates it beyond merely empirical work but art is nevertheless viewed as lesser than moral action guided by prudence, whose end is virtue. The distinction between the two is illustrated by Aristotle and Aquinas, who note that while in art voluntary error—deliberately breaking the rules—is better than involuntary error, in prudence and moral action, involuntary is preferable to wilful error.⁴³

The *Nicomachean Ethics* examines the moral virtues of the practical intelligence which determine *praxis*, the ethical activity studied by the *politeia* on which the state is founded. While *praxis*, which concerns human affairs, ultimately has its highest form in *theōria*, the intellectual activity (*energeia*) in which man is most god-like and so most perfect, it nevertheless forms the basis of human community (*Nic. Eth.* x.7, 1177a12–1178a8). If *praxis* is governed by the intellectual virtue of prudence (*phronēsis*), it has its fullest manifestation in justice, in which all the moral virtues are contained.⁴⁴ Virtue is associated with opportunity in the sense of the opportune, *kairos*, which will be translated into a stylistic criterion in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.⁴⁵ In *Rhetoric* 111.7, 1408a–1408b, Aristotle speaks of decorum (*prepon*) in terms of *analogia* (proportion) and *eukairos*, or timeliness. The *praxis* of virtue in the right time, place and manner is based on the categorical analysis of circumstances and on *kairos*, in the sense of acting to the purpose. The exercise (*energeia*) of virtue which constitutes the good of the human soul, suited to the occasion, results in the attainment of that which one could neither add to nor take away from,

41 On Danti, see Chapter 7.

42 I retain *praxis* in italics to emphasise that the term is used as discussed by Aristotle, not with the Marxist, methodical or procedural implications of its modern usage.

43 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* v1.5.7, 1140b20; *Summa theologiae* 1–11.57.5.

44 *Nicomachean Ethics* v.1, 1129b29–30, quoting the proverb from Theognis, *Elegies*, 147.

45 See Struever on sophistical and rhetorical understandings of *kairos*: “The harmony which assigns identity is a product of the moment, proper and fitting circumstance, *kairos*”, *Language of History*, 12.

thus leading to the ethical discussion of proportion and the mean (*Nic. Eth.* 11.6, 1106a14–1107a27). If virtue as action in the fitting moment and manner is characterised as a mean between two vices, justice, chief of the moral virtues, is considered as proportion—distributive justice as geometric proportion and corrective justice as the restoration of arithmetical proportion. To illustrate the latter, Aristotle has recourse to the figure of the divided line as the measure which restores the mean or brings the unequal into equality (*Nic. Eth.* v.4, 1132a32–1132b9).

If ornament is seen as a qualification of things so that they appear best according to circumstances, then it must belong in the sphere of judgement, and principally amongst the arts. (There is however reference to greatness of soul as the “ornament of the virtues” in *Nic. Eth.* IV.3, 1124a1, or virtue as the ornament of the soul in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomia* 111.1.15–19, a formula which would have an enduring Christian tradition.)⁴⁶ The increase in being in ornament noted by Coomaraswamy runs counter to Aristotle’s comment that substance admits of no degrees of quality; something cannot be ‘more’ or ‘less’ in its substance (*Categories* 3b, 32–35). However, when we are dealing with art and virtue, we are in the sphere of judgement and variation, which entails a more or less appropriate response to circumstances. If Aristotelian thought implies that ornament belongs to the sphere of the accidental, it also insists on the presence of the accidental throughout human actions and making.

Thus one huge area of Aristotle’s significance for the understanding of ornament is in development of discussion of the role of circumstance and variety in ethics and art. In Platonic thought and its Milesian antecedents we noted the exploration of the relations between order and its absence, or the continuity between universal, moral and artificial order. Aristotle’s discussion of virtue entails the choice of action from a range of possibilities in a given situation. He provides categories (what, when, where, how) to guide moral choice but *kairos* also has an implicit, intuitive aspect which persists in Dionysius’ rhetorical rendering of it as literary taste. In place of the continuities disclosed through Pythagorean harmony or Platonic dialectic, the *Nicomachean Ethics* presents actions selected from a background of potentiality.

The subsequent rhetorical tradition attempts to codify situations of *praxis*, whether through detailing *exempla*, the topical treatment of arguments and questions or the taxonomy of figures. Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* stands at the head of this tradition as we know it, with its discussion of topics appropriate to certain kinds of arguments and delineation of the characters involved, on the

46 See *Summa Theologiae* 2a–2ae. 129.4; Thomas Taylor’s translation of Plotinus 1.2.1 speaks of “ornament and the virtues” as derived from the intelligibles.

basis of probability. Aristotle takes one motive of Plato's criticism of sophistic rhetoric—its lack of a specific area of expertise—as a defining feature of rhetoric and its shared feature with dialectic.⁴⁷ Plato's discussion of rhetoric as based in the knowledge of argument and of the soul in rhetorical literature becomes a guide to strategies for winning arguments concerning probability; knowledge of the soul is debased into a list of ethical types or characters and their pathetic effects. The topical approach is conspicuous in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, which shows Aristotelian influence and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* discusses *exempla* (in Aristotle's view, the rhetorical version of induction) and their prominence in Hellenistic rhetoric.⁴⁸ The way that the three kinds of rhetoric (forensic, deliberative, epideictic) are described from Aristotle on in terms of opposing activities (prosecute/defend, persuade/dissuade, praise/blame) suggests the account of change as a movement between contraries, especially in the agonistic contexts of forensic and deliberative rhetoric.⁴⁹

The taxonomic approach to ornament as providing ways of 'equipping' speech emerges in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* III and Theophrastus, Aristotle's pupil, in his lost work on style (*Perilexeōs*) codified four virtues of style: purity of language (*hellenismos*), clarity or lucidity (*saphes*), appropriateness (*prepon*) and ornament (*kataskeuē*), divided into choice of words, arrangement (*harmonia*) and figures of speech (*schēmata*).⁵⁰ *Kataskeuē* signifies preparation, arrangement or equipment, necessities. The four-fold division appears in Demetrius' *On style* (*Peri hermēneias*) with its four styles: grand, elegant, plain and vehement.⁵¹ Demetrius also discusses the vices which correspond to the four styles: frigidity for grand style, affectation for elegant style, aridity for plain style, gracelessness for vehement style. The relation of virtues, governed by proportion and appropriateness, to corresponding vices, marked by loss of measure, is here translated from ethics to literary criticism.

Theophrastus' terminology is used by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his critical essays which associate the ornament of speech with qualities (dignity,

47 See *Rhetoric* 1.1 for discussion of rhetoric as counterpart to dialectic; the view of enthymeme and example as rhetorical counterparts to syllogism and induction is developed throughout Books 1 and 2. Plato's critique of rhetoric's lack of proper subject matter appears in *Gorgias* and *Hippias Major*.

48 On the common topics in *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, see 1421b, 1425b, 1426a; on *exempla* and imitation, see *ibid.* IV.1.1–7.10, IV.49.62 on their 'illuminating' effect.

49 See *ibid.* 1440b on the non-agonistic character of epideictic.

50 Cicero alludes to Theophrastus' four-fold scheme in *Orator* 23.79. The four-fold scheme appears also in Quintilian XI.3.30.

51 Demetrius' *On style* is dated by Dirk Schenkeveld to the first century BCE; see Demetrius, *Sullo stile*, trans. Alessia Ascani (Milan: Rizzoli, 2002), 23–5.

charm, pleasure, loftiness, austerity etc.) and regard the greatest orator—Demosthenes—as the speaker who varies style to match audience, themes and parts of speech.⁵² The three-fold division into ‘grand’, ‘middle’ and ‘plain’ styles, whose first extant source is *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1v.8–12, is used by Dionysius to elaborate sets of qualities attached to these styles, culminating in the ‘universal’ style of Demosthenes who goes beyond the mixed or middle style to the mastery of all stylistic registers and their judicious employment. With Dionysius, ornament already appears as the appropriate dress for speech as determined by its theme, part (e.g. exordium, narration or proof), occasion and audience. Demetrius and Dionysius—like Cicero in *Orator*—thus treat ornament as something which qualifies speech, and is fundamental to discussions of exemplarity and definitions of kind at the base of genre theory. In the same vein, Quintilian lists the qualities which speech can have, and which will guide our choice of ornamentation.⁵³ In this view, ornament is always present in rhetoric in some form, since all speech is circumstanced and has accidental determination. The central part played by ornament in rhetorical theory is thus based on its circumstantial, qualifying character.⁵⁴

We have suggested that a fundamental area of Aristotle’s influence on conceptions of ornament lies in his discussions of *energeia*, actuality. While *energeia* is used in *Nicomachean Ethics* to denote the activity of practising a virtue, the most important role of *energeia* is in Aristotelian metaphysics, where it is the actualisation of potential that changes a substance. In living things, such change can be the growth which brings things to perfection, like the plant which reaches maturity, or it can be the activity for which a thing is formed and in which it realises its purpose. Thus a leg is actualised in bearing weight, or in movement. The way that *energeia* appears as an artificial quality requires attention. We have mentioned the noted passage in *Rhetoric* 111.11.1–5, 1411b–1412a where Aristotle speaks of *energeia* as proper to metaphor

52 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Demosthenes* in *Critical Essays* 1, trans. Stephen Usher (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). Demosthenes is said to combine the virtues of the ‘simple’ style, exemplified by Lysias, and the loftiness associated with Thucydides, while avoiding their respective faults—weakness in emotional appeal and obscurity. Cf. *Orator* 28.99 on the orator of the grand style, who must know how to combine all levels of oratory appropriately, lest he appear a madman or drunkard—references which suggest the “dithyrambics” criticised by Dionysius. Cicero praises actors who can perform both comedy and tragedy, reflecting the versatility which denotes the ideal orator (*ibid.*, 31.100).

53 Quintilian VIII.3.40.

54 On the association of decorum and ornament conceived as quality, see Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 38.

and notes that metaphor—especially, Homeric metaphor—makes inanimate things appear to live.

The high value placed on the representation of movement in Renaissance art should be regarded in relation to actualisation as a principle of being in Aristotelian metaphysics. A moving figure is praiseworthy in metaphysical terms, since it shows life and activity, as well as in rhetorical terms, where its movement has an affective value. When Aristotle speaks of metaphor possessing *energeia* since it appears to make lifeless things live, we are however in the realm of artifice and illusion. *Energeia* as a property of metaphor and ornamental artifice provides a theoretical basis for the *topoi* about animated statues and moving, illusionist paintings which flourish in the *ekphraseis* of the Second Sophistic and again in Renaissance literature about art.

The other important point is that Aristotle's account of essence is focussed on individual things and how they are produced, develop and achieve perfection. Actuality, to which beauty is intimately linked, appears in the optimum development and activity of a thing in correspondence with its purpose, rather than the contemplation of a thing revealed in its place within the universal order. There is an ordered universe, moved by the prime mover, but the account of form's actualisation of the potentiality of matter is suited to provide an account of the reality of individual things within the world, in their varied appearances and states. This is one distinction between Aristotle's hylomorphic metaphysics and earlier philosophic ideas of the relation of the determinate and indeterminacy, form and formless, which extended this principle from universal ordering to all other created and artificial things. He regards the principle of actualisation as immanent, the law of growth and development within plants and creatures. Aristotle insists that art can work by the same processes of causation as those which occur in nature, so that art can not only imitate but even perfect nature (*Physics* 199a). However, this gives us a situation in which art and nature can become analogous rather than the continuity of ordering between the universal and the particular products of artifice. Ornament, considered as the *energeia* which makes inanimate appearances seem to live and move, exists within the realm of artifice only.

Aristotle's discussion of *energeia* in literature lays the foundation for the association of ornament with the marvellous as well as the ornamental character of lively or graceful movement. This also suggests a modal understanding of ornament, which will be developed in Quintilian. Still more fundamental is Aristotle's delineation of *praxis*, where the moral agent selects from the possibilities offered by a certain situation. The characterisation of ornament as necessities or equipment—*kataskeuē*—in Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus, denotes its conception as the instrument required to 'equip' speech for a

situation. The Latin noun *ornatus* similarly signifies equipment or accoutrements; as participle *ornatus* signifies a qualified state, although the term is used also as a noun.⁵⁵ In an understanding of ornament derived from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it mediates between a background of possibility and a moral actor.⁵⁶ Or better, it is through the ornament that we perceive the nature of the situation, as it illuminates the ground of possibility. In this sense, we can understand the attention which rhetorical manuals to give codification of the kinds of situation and what they require. It is however the relation with the moral actor which is prominent, with the ornament conceived as instrument, attribute or artwork.

Hellenistic Artifice and Rhetoric

By the Hellenistic period art exhibits a sophisticated consciousness of its own artifice, engendering plays between forms and kinds of art. This self-consciousness might be linked to the Aristotelian influences underlying Hellenistic literary culture, with his pupil Theophrastus the teacher of Demetrius of Phaleron, credited with initiating the creation of the library at Alexandria, where Peripatetic linguistic theories concerning the analogical basis of grammar flourished.⁵⁷ The activities of collection, compilation and codification that characterised the library at Alexandria likewise point to an origin in Aristotle and Theophrastus. The philological, antiquarian approach to the study of language and style is one aspect of this Hellenistic tradition; the pervasive use of theatricality in the visual arts is another.

Art imitates other forms of art, a point made by translations between literary and visual, between visual media and by artistic use of genres or dialects, as in Theocritus' use of 'rustic' Doric dialect in the pastoral *Idylls*. Such imitation

55 Sextus Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatu quae supersunt* 185, glosses *ornatus* as being prepared or versed in good arts ("bonis artibus instructus") and obtaining or being suited for honours ("honores adeptus . . . etiam bene aptus") as well as the decoration with which things are adorned, like a tragic or comic actor's gear ("cultus ipse, quo quis ornatur, ut cum dicimus aliquem tragico vel comico ornatu prodire").

56 The adjective *oikeios*, from *oikos*, house or home, used in Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III.7 to designate fitting characteristics, suggests the articulation of the background.

57 For the grammatical and philological culture of Alexandria, see F. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* 1. *From the Sixth Century BC to the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Hafner 1967); Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1968); *The Library of Alexandria: Centre of Learning in the Ancient World*, ed. Roy MacLeod (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

requires a culture of scholarly, critical preservation and evaluation, but also assumes that the arts work in analogous ways, with a comparable structure of causality. The self-conscious character implied by imitation of one art by another and the cultivation of illusion as an artistic goal have consequences for ornament.⁵⁸ It appears at the limits of a visual field which is characteristically scenographic, exhibits skilful displays of illusionism or appears where there are boundaries and relations between the arts.

Hellenistic conceptions of art elucidate the verbal-visual allusions which become notable in rhetorical discussions of ornament.⁵⁹ The imitation of one art by another has its corollary in a continuum of illustration, from the decoration of monumental interiors to the inscription of small artefacts. This adornment of objects with text could also become a literary genre, the epigram, with its fiction of inscription and its celebration as “garland”.⁶⁰ With the *Greek Anthology* we encounter a poetic genre where not only the mode but the content, genre and purpose are conceived in ornamental terms.⁶¹ This involves techniques of variation and inter-textuality in the treatment of thematic topoi—the speaking tomb, inscribed statue or ingenious artwork, the suitor at his lover’s closed door, the verses on animals, children drowned in the Hebrus, or Spartan mothers.⁶² These miniature poems do not carry allegories or effect catharsis through *mythos*; they can appear akin to maxims or present telescopic character portraits and to that extent are similar to the ethical and pathetic topoi listed by Aristotle in *Rhetoric*. They present themselves

58 On the aestheticism, theatricality and verbal-visual communication in Hellenistic art, see Barbara Fowler, *The Hellenistic Aesthetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

59 The term Hellenistic is first used by Johann Gustav Droysen in *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1833).

60 Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter, *Tradition and innovation in Hellenistic poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 283, discuss the epigram as both ephemeral, like graffiti on cups, and monumental inscription.

61 I use *Greek Anthology* to refer to the so-called “Palatine Anthology”, the 10th century anthology of Constantine Cephalus discovered by Salmasius in the Biblioteca Palatina, Heidelberg, in 1606. The thirteenth century anthology of Maximus Planudes known to the Renaissance is referred to as the “Planudean Anthology”. Planudes has epigrams on artworks not contained in the Palatine anthology; for details see *The Greek Anthology*, eds. A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to 1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1935).

62 On the epigrams, see inter alia *Hellenistic epigrams*, M.A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit, and G.C. Wakker eds. (Louvain: Peeters, 2002), esp. Kathryn Gutzwiller, “Art’s Echo: The Tradition of the Hellenistic Epiphastic Epigram”, 85–112; Marco Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter, *Tradition and innovation*, 283–349; Jon Bruss, “Epigram”, in *Companion to Hellenistic literature*, 117–35.

as decorative, as fragmentary (or ephemeral), as literary figurations of visual artefacts, as depictions of symbolic interpretation or as pretexts for displays of poetic skill in variation or ingenuity.⁶³ In the Greek epigrams, we see lines of thought about the nature of literary ornament which will appear in Latin rhetorical treatises; ornament described in terms of visual artefacts, in terms of figural translations between words and images, but, in particular, as embellishing fragment where ingenuity and skill in variation are displayed. The themes of praise, descriptions of delights or ingenious artifice also suggest a link with epideictic, panegyric and with sophistic rhetoric.

The epigrams constitute a fiction of artefacts adorned with figural speech; the proems of the anthologies of Meleager (c. first century BCE) and Philippos in the Augustan period describe them as ornaments, as garlands woven from poets described as “flowers”.⁶⁴ The garland woven from diverse flowers makes an overt reference to variety, and implies that poetry regenerates itself by the cycle of imitation and variation which accompanies reverent study for the great poets, with their distinct topoi, from the lyrical-elegiac beauties of rose, ivy, myrtle or violet to the thistle of iambic invective.⁶⁵ The imitative or emulative character of the anthology is also signalled by Philippos’ proem, who compares his ‘garland’, woven from younger poets (implicitly, fresher flowers) to that of Meleager. Similar is the metaphor of the poet as bee or lover of the Muses or the rarefied Hellenistic scholar poet as a cicada, a creature of air and dewdrops.⁶⁶ Like the ethereal cicada, the bee is a delicate creature, but where the cicada is used to figure for the rarefied, immaterial existence of the lover of the Muses, the bee signals nourishment and substantial transformation.

63 For epigrams on symbolic interpretation, see Antipater of Sidon, *Greek Anth.* VII.427, Leonidas of Tarentum, *ibid.* VII.422 and Meleager, *ibid.* VII.428 on the reading or riddling of rebuses on tombs as a competitive intertextual game between poets. See Simon Goodhill, “Ecphrasis and the Culture of Vision”, in *Art and Text in ancient Greek Culture*, eds. Simon Goodhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 197–223.

64 *Greek Anthology* IV.1–2. The garland in visual art is discussed in Chapter 3.

65 The poets figured by rose, lily, crocus, hyacinth, ivy and myrtle in Meleager’s garland are Sappho, Anyte, Erinna, Alcaeus, Leonidas, Callimachus. Plato is a “golden bough, ever divine” (l. 47).

66 *Phaedrus* 259d; for poet as cicada, see Callimachus in *Aetia* frag. 1; Theocritus 1.148; Posidippus, *Greek Anthology* XII.98, where the cicada (the poet’s soul) can withstand love’s torments because it has inured itself by the rigours of study. Callimachus exemplifies the coincidence of philological scholar and poet which would form an ideal for the Humanists; his most celebrated scholarly creation was the *Pinakes*, index lists which itemised the production of each literary writer, and so instituted bibliography.

The garland as topos for varied, imitative, scholarly poetry or poetic scholarship is linked with the bee as metaphor for the poet in Plato, *Ion* 533e–534b and Horace, *Odes* IV.2. Plato and Horace take the bee metaphor in different directions, both of which are appropriate to the *Anthology*; the Horatian bee, who drinks from many flowers, stresses imitation and variety while Plato's bee-poet is "light, winged and sacred", suggesting the airy, lightweight and ephemeral character of poetry inferred in the topos of poets as flowers. Such associations are exploited in the *Anthology*, in the references to Sappho as "Pierian bee", the "Pierian bee" at the mouth of Homer or the honeycomb made on the mouth of the baby Pindar.⁶⁷ The honey imagery continues in the third proem of the *Anthology*, that of Agathias Scholasticus (dated to the age of Justinian), who calls his collection a banquet, the wares of the bee, a varied garland of elegy or a wreath of eloquent Calliope offered as attributes are offered to other gods.⁶⁸ Such topoi link sweetness with variety, and the Muses with both. The inspiration or erudition of the Muses in this sense concerns scholarship (thus, potentially, imitation) and pleasure, rather than the analogies between the disciplines and universal harmonies posited by Plutarch (*Quaestiones convivales* 9.14) and later allegorists. The poet as lightweight insect is sacred to the Muses but rarefied and delicate; like the garland, associated both with ephemeral pleasure and the immortality of fame. Such topoi are consonant with a view of ornament as an exemplification of self-conscious, imitative, sophisticated artifice.

The ornamental character of the *Anthology* corresponds to the elegant style (*glaphyros*) discussed by Demetrius in *On style*; such elegances are associated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus with the Sophists and their imitators. Demetrius also discusses grace or charm (*charis*), the principle property of elegant style, with poetry, and exemplified by Sappho, the rose or chief glory of Philippus' garland.⁶⁹ Elegant style is linked to particular themes, such as gardens of the nymphs, marriages or *erotes*; Dirk Schenkeveld notes the epideictic character of such subjects.⁷⁰ As we shall see, these epideictic themes were closely associated with sophistic rhetoric by Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

The historicist sensibility associated with late Hellenistic art, known for its imitation of earlier Greek art ("archaism", "Neo-atticism"), appears in the literary

67 *Greek Anthology* 11.11 (Sappho), 20 (Erinna distilling honey), 42 (Homer), 50 (Pindar).

68 *Ibid.*, IV.3.

69 Demetrius 132, 166.

70 Schenkeveld, preface to Demetrius, *Sullo stile*, 20.

essays of Dionysius.⁷¹ Dionysius, who came to Rome in 30 or 29 BCE, illustrates the terminology and critical habits of late Hellenistic literary culture, just after its translation into Latin terms by Cicero.⁷² His discussions point to a refined literary culture, where the analogies between literary and visual art have become an object of connoisseurship. They reflect the sophistication of Hellenistic artistic culture, with its erudite processes of design, range of visual styles and phases of conscious archaism or classicism; like rhetoric, it aimed at psychological portraiture, expressive affect or anticipated a capacity for refined discernment and interpretation.⁷³ Dionysius' Greek illuminates the kind of language (e.g. derivations from Theophrastus) which Cicero was rendering and thus deepens the discussions of ornament we find in the Roman rhetoricians.

Dionysius' critical essays on classical Greek orators (Lysias, Isaeus, Demosthenes, Thucydides) introduce us to what could be called the ornamental terminology of ornament. By this I mean the discussion of ornaments of speech by means of metaphor or analogies, in particular analogies with other arts. One point about comparisons to other arts is that they are often used to advance distinctions between stylistic types or kinds—a tendency also striking in Cicero's *Orator*. Thus Dionysius compares the lofty and 'simple' styles to the highest and lowest strings of an instrument which respectively excite emotion and soothe the mind.⁷⁴ He describes the experience of reading Lysias as listening to piped libation music or enharmonic melodies, while the emotional transport of reading Demosthenes is compared to participating in the rites of Cybele and the Corybantes.⁷⁵ Another practitioner of lofty speech, Isocrates, is compared to the artists (Polykleitos, Phidias) who excelled in making images

71 See Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1988), 248.

72 Margarete Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, (revised ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 3–4, follows Droysen in seeing the end of the Hellenistic age at the beginning of Augustus' rule; she sees the influence of Greek art in the Roman empire thereafter as a matter of continuation rather than innovation. On the reception and imitation of Hellenistic poetry in Rome, see Fantuzzi and Hunter, *Tradition and innovation*, 444–85.

73 The conscious historicism and aestheticism of Hellenistic art is suggested even by the historicist vocabulary projected on it in modern discussion: "Hellenistic baroque", "Hellenistic rococo", "Hellenistic Neoclassicism", "Hellenistic archaism". See Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 137, on this point.

74 *Demosthenes* 2.

75 *Ibid.*, 22. The image suggests dithyramb, which Dionysius consistently associates with the vulgarity of Gorgianic style and its 'imitators', such as Plato. Pollitt, *Art and Experience*

of heroes and gods, works on a superhuman scale.⁷⁶ The counter-example, Lysias, is likened to the artists famed for lightness and charm (Calamis and Callimachus), whose virtues lay in their precision and verism.⁷⁷ Isocrates and Thucydides excelled at large subjects or made them appear larger than life; Lysias miniaturised his representations.⁷⁸ Lysias' style is compared to old paintings, coloured simply, whose charm lies in their outline, in contrast to later pictures, filled with detail and varied (*poikillomenai*) with light and shade, with their artful blending of colour.⁷⁹ Such artifice aims to show its *technē*, and its ostentatious artfulness suggests the intention to mislead.⁸⁰ Demosthenes, who employed the grand manner without succumbing to its vices, is likened to Proteus, who was either a divinity with power to deceive human eyes or a wise man who beguiled every ear with the varied colour (*poikilon ti chrōma*) of his speech.⁸¹ Dionysius' language evokes Plato's characterisation of the sophist as a *poikilon thērion* who, Proteus-like, must be caught and held in the "net" of definitions.⁸² By contrast, Lysias' verism, which appears credible and persuasive, is the greatest product of art.⁸³

In his essay on Lysias, Dionysius delineates a conception of ornament which will reappear in Castiglione's famous discussions on the art which hides art and the vices of *affettazione*. He also differentiates between attractiveness or pleasure (*hēdonē*) and beauty (*to kalon*), in a way which prefigures Bembo's distinction between sweet and grave style and echoes Aristotle's distinction between pleasant (*hēdeia*) and magnificent style (*megaloprepē*).⁸⁴ *Hēdonē* lies in freshness, charm, sweetness, euphony and persuasiveness while beauty is

in *Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 125, calls "the flowing drapery style" of Nikē figures "obviously Gorgianic in spirit".

76 *Isocrates* 2.

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Ibid.*, *Demosthenes* 2. 'Longinus', *On the sublime* 38.2, notes that Isocrates fell into puerility through his intention to amplify everything.

79 *Isaeus* 4. Cf. Cicero, *Orator* 50.169, where the preference for ancient paintings with their limited colours is a point of criticism.

80 *Isaeus* 16, 18.

81 *Demosthenes* 8.

82 *Sophist* 226a. Also cited in Erkinger Schwarzenburg, "Colour, Light and Transparency in the Greek World", in *Medieval Mosaics: Light, Colour Materials*, ed. Eve Borsook, Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi and Giovanni Pagliarulo (Milan: Silvano Editoriale, 2000), 15–34, 18.

83 *Isaeus* 16. On Lysias' capacity to make the false appear true, see *Lysias* 18.

84 *Rhetoric* 111.12.6, 1414a; cf. Bembo, *Prosa della volgar lingua* (1524), Book 2 on the grave and sweet style.

constituted by magnificence, solemnity, seriousness, dignity and mellowness.⁸⁵ Abuse of ornament, persistently linked by Dionysius with Gorgias, is associated with the search for grand effects and compared to painterly illusion.⁸⁶ The references to ornamentation as ‘colours’ do not just denote variety, splendour or the related vice of ostentation, but specifically illusionism and relief.⁸⁷ Thus amongst his censures of Isocrates and Plato for their over-embellished style, he likens their writing to *glyptoi* and *toreutoi*—sculpted and engraved or embossed artefacts. Vividness (*enargeia*) is praiseworthy when it contributes to the illusion of naturalness—thus Lysias is Dionysius’ exemplar for *enargeia*, which Demetrius also describes as a virtue of plain style.⁸⁸ By contrast, the artful illusion of relief in painted *chiaroscuro* draws attention to its own artifice.

For Dionysius such overtly artificial illusion is sophistic and unsuited to oratory; it uses ornament to create a sphere of self-proclaimed artifice, which arouses wonder in those who see it. By contrast, Lysias’ *enargeia* lies in his grasp of circumstantial detail (i.e. accidents) which makes his representation of character, his *ēthopoieia* so credible. Demetrius speaks emphatically of *enargeia* as consisting in the rendering of accidents, using the term *symbainonta*, closely related to the Aristotelian term for accident, *symbebēkos*.⁸⁹ Dionysius says that we seem to see what happens as we read Lysias because the actions and words he ascribes to character are so appropriate; Lysias’ command of *enargeia* shows his mastery of the *prepon*. This grasp of appropriateness leads to Lysias’ grace or charm (*charis*), the inborn quality which “blossoms” in his writing, which is grasped by the judgement of the senses, not by reason.⁹⁰ Dionysius’ account of *charis* stands at the head of a critical tradition concerned with the *je ne sais quoi* of grace as the ‘ornament’ of lucid style, with its use of pure, simple language, everyday vocabulary and the avoidance of overt artifice in rhythm or figures. Grace is not identical with the appropriate; Demosthenes,

85 Dionysius, *On Literary Composition* 10–11; *Demosthenes* 47.

86 The contemporary version of overly ornate style is for Dionysius Asianism, which he lambasts in the preface of *On the ancient orators*; see Whitmarsh, *Second Sophistic*, 50–51, on Wilamowitz-Möllendorff’s dismissal of Asianism as a slogan coined by ‘guardians’ of Atticism such as Dionysius presents himself to be.

87 See *De oratore* III.57.217 where the orator’s or actor’s modulation of the voice is likened to a painter’s use of colour. Erasmus in *De copia* I.2 notes that Cicero and the actor Roscius used to compete to see who could express *sententia* most ways, with words or with gestures.

88 *Lysias* 7; Demetrius, *On style* 209–211, 214, 217, 219–220.

89 Demetrius, *On style* 209. Both terms are participles derived from *symbainein*, to come together, meet, agree, suit or be conformable.

90 *Lysias* 11.

greatest of orators for his ability to match and vary style to match content and occasion, lacks this one quality.⁹¹

Overt ornament is compared by Dionysius to pictorial artifice. *Charis* is discussed with reference to timeliness, *kairos*, which appears as melody in the movement of music, as rhythm and order in the *symmetria* or arrangement of tempo in verse and as the blossoming of the seasonable (*hōra*) in the beauty of bodies.⁹² Dionysius conceives *charis* in temporal terms, characterizing abuse of style as *akairos* or *akairia*—a fault again linked with Gorgianic affectation.⁹³

Dionysius' use of *kairos* reveals the ethical underpinnings of oratory, if we recall the presence of occasion in Aristotle's discussion of virtue in *Nicomachean Ethics*: doing the right thing in the right way in the right time and place. Dionysius does not develop this as does Cicero in his discussion of decorum; his treatment of *kairos* is more concerned with the appearance or impression (*phantasia*) made by speech, using *kairos* to refer to good taste.⁹⁴ The allusions to *hōra* as bloom or blossoming are developed by Dionysius in ways that imply a surface of speech. One example comes in Dionysius' extraordinary description of Plato's "good" style, when he eschews Gorgianic dithyrambs and exhibits the lucidity proper to philosophy.⁹⁵ When he writes plainly his writing is very pure, like the most diaphanous of streams; like the most fragrant of meadows, a sweet breeze is carried from it, while it has an almost imperceptible patina of age which imparts a verdant, burgeoning bloom (*hōras anthos*) full of vigour.⁹⁶

91 *Demosthenes* 54. Demetrius also notes that the vice of vehement style, exemplified by Demosthenes, is gracelessness, *acharis* (*On style* 302). Cf. 'Longinus', *On the sublime*, 34.4.

92 *Lysias* 10.

93 See *Demosthenes* 26 on Plato's use of Gorgianic parallelisms in the wrong place as an instance of *akairia*.

94 Dionysius uses *phantasia* in this sense at *Demosthenes* 22, in comparison of Demosthenes' oratory to celebration of the rites of Cybele and at *ibid.*, 40, on the effect of euphony in composition. On *kairos* as good taste, see *On Literary Composition* 12, where Gorgias is again censured.

95 Contrast 'Longinus', *On the sublime* 13.1–4 where Plato is discussed as an inspired imitator of Homer. 'Longinus' at 32.6–7 does however note criticism of Plato for alleged lapses into metaphoric bombast (quoting *Laws* VI, 773a), citing Cecilius, a Jewish rhetorician, who had elevated Lysias above Plato, and whose treatment of the sublime provoked *On the sublime* (*ibid.*, 32.8). The position recalls that of Dionysius, although 'Longinus' does not name him.

96 *Demosthenes* 5. Dionysius develops the comparison between Plato's writing as a pleasant, flowery place where travellers rest versus Demosthenes' oratory as a fertile farm (*ibid.*, 32). The contrast reappears in Quintilian VIII.3.8–11, with a farm full of flowers as an image for ornament divorced from use. The flowery landscape and travellers' resting place suggest

It is instantly noticeable that Dionysius uses elaborate figurative language to describe a style which involves the avoidance of such devices. The similes—the limpid stream, sweet meadows and fragrant breezes anticipate the virtues of Petrarch's lyrics, whose content consists of *topoi* for the grace of 'simple' style. The transparent surface, whose virtues emanate like light or breezes, contrasts with the illusion of relief created by the 'colours' of grand style; both concern the qualification of a surface.⁹⁷ The surface which shows bloom can also show age, as in the statement that the subtle patina of antiquity (*pinos* . . . *archaiotētōs*) imparts verdure and flowering to Plato's style.⁹⁸ Dionysius elsewhere conjoins "bloom" to the surface effects of aging (*archaiopinēs*), using the term *chnous*, which signifies something that lies on a surface and may be easily scraped from it, like down on fruit or the cheek.⁹⁹ The same allusion appears in 'Longinus', who names *eupineia*—mellowness or patina that gives a brilliance—in words as in statues as a virtue of the best style, and which seems to endow them with a speaking voice. This reflection is followed by the remark that beautiful words are the very light of thought, which again points back to the *phantasia*.¹⁰⁰ The apparently contradictory reference to blossom and antique patina would seem to mean that age enhances speech, bringing its qualities to the surface. The reference becomes less obscure if we recall Pliny's account of the varnish (*atramentum*) used by Apelles, which mellowed or aged the colours while also bringing out their diaphanous quality and the illusion of blooming flesh.¹⁰¹ In similar fashion, Dionysius suggests that Plato's subtly antique quality acts as a patina which brings the language to full beauty and maturity, displaying its full qualities, as though verdant and vigorous. The reference can also be used negatively, as when Dionysius says the orator should avoid the austere mode of

the epideictic subjects noted by Demetrius and the ekphrastic themes favoured in Latin Silver Age prose.

- 97 For a different description of the effects of *chiaroscuro*, see 'Longinus', *On the sublime* 17.2–3 where relief is a metaphor for the brilliance of sublimity which distracts attention from the artifice of the figures which achieve it. The use of relief to describe art hiding art appears also in Castiglione, who is not known to have used 'Longinus'.
- 98 On *pinos* used of the patina on bronze statues, see Plutarch, *De defectu oracolorum* 395b ff. The primary meaning is filth, or the oil on athletes' bodies.
- 99 *Demosthenes* 38 on the austere style in composition, which should have "the delicate bloom of antiquity" (*chnous archaiopinēs*).
- 100 *On the sublime* 30.1.
- 101 Pliny, *NH* XXXV.36.97, discussed in Schwarzenburg, "Colour", 31–32. Amongst Apelles' varnished paintings was Venus Anadyomene, with her legs appearing through the water; it was praised by Cicero in *De natura deorum* 1.27.75 as "simile sanguinis". Given the association of *charis* with 'bloom', Pliny praises Apelles for his unique grace in *NH* XXXV.36.79.

composition in epideictic, where the patina (*pinos*) becomes a “dry and musty antiquity”.¹⁰² Negative images of improper ornament as surface blemishes appear also in Quintilian, who compares overuse of *sententiae* or a low word in grand style to a stain, and a lofty word in simple style to tumescence.¹⁰³

I have lingered on this point because it raises two matters of importance for conceptions of ornament in Renaissance antiquarianism. One is the notion of the surface of speech, and its varied understandings: as transparency, illumination, covering or support where illusion is created. The other is the way that temporal determinations carry an ornamental value, whether they exhibit the ‘flower’ of youth or the patina of age. Such qualities appear in the ‘surface’ of speech and illuminate the timeliness which is a part of beauty as *hōra* and of appropriateness, *kairos*. Thus there is a temporal aspect to the qualification of surfaces in the ornamenting of speech. This understanding will return with Humanist interest in antiquity as something which imparts ornament and will contribute to the association of ornament with historicism.

As a final note, one might compare the various pictorial styles which Dionysius uses as descriptive metaphors with the interest in juxtaposing diverse styles of Greek painting evident in the fictive picture galleries or *pinacothecae* as depicted in Cubiculum B of the Villa Farnesina (Rome, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, dated c. 20 BCE).¹⁰⁴ Here, as in Dionysius’ literary metaphors, we see comparison between the restrained grace of white-ground *pinakes* which resemble Attic white ground vase painting of the fifth century, and which flank a narrative panel showing Dionysus nursed by the nymphs of Nysa which imitates what we know of Hellenistic painting at its peak: coherent handling of modelling, depth and light in creation of an illusionistic scene which is both scenically and emotionally arresting. Dionysius’ writings and the Farnesina decorations suggest a similar preoccupation with stylistic analysis and historicism; the way that assemblage of the various exemplars results in a kind of fictive museum in the Farnesina is worth remembering for subsequent Renaissance preoccupations for verbal-visual crossovers in exploration of the “ornament of antiquity”.

102 *Demosthenes* 44.

103 Quintilian VIII.3.18, VIII.5.28 on the ‘spattered’ effect of overuse of *sententiae*.

104 See John Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy 100 BC–250 AD: Ritual, Space and Decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 52; cf. *ibid.*, 64, on the Augustan painted *pinacothecae* as denoting the “owner as a person of culture, connoisseur of the great Greek masterpieces”.



FIGURE 2.1 *Cubiculum B, Villa Farnesina, c. 20 BCE. Rome, National Museum at Palazzo Massimo alle Terme.*

PHOTO: MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO—
SOPRAINTENDENZA SPECIALE PER I BENI ARCHEOLOGICI DI ROMA.

Discussions of Ornament in Roman Rhetoric

As translator of Greek literature (including poetry), collector of Greek art and central to the importation or adaptation of Greek thought in Rome Cicero can be regarded as a kind of *terminus ad quem* of Hellenistic culture.¹⁰⁵ Cicero is a

¹⁰⁵ On Cicero as a collector of Hellenistic art, see T. Webster, *Hellenistic Art* (London: Methuen, 1966), 200–1; Ann Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 109–10.

central point of contact for the preoccupations shared by Hellenistic art and Renaissance antiquarianism—collectionism, aestheticism, pervasive theatricality, individualism, naturalism, allegory, play of allusion between visual and literary arts, imitation of earlier art, philological approaches in the invention as well as the study of literature. Cicero's discussions of rhetoric move between evocations of the plasticity of speech, which can be endlessly formed and reformed, and the affirmation of its participation in universal order, or the attempt to discover its 'form', or generic forms in *Orator*.¹⁰⁶ It was Cicero's task to attempt to ground this artificial conception of ornament in cosmic order and harmony. In *De oratore* and *De officiis* Cicero rehearses Stoic evocations of the world as the exemplar of harmony and order, and the continuity of those qualities in human actions and art.¹⁰⁷ In *Orator*, Cicero makes the decisive contribution to an art theory based on Platonism, with his identification of the artist's inner concept as a Platonic form. This passage will concern us later, as it has considerable importance for Renaissance views of artistic invention. *Orator*, though it opens with the Platonic forms, ends with a long discussion of the judgement of sense in prose rhythm which stresses the particularity and non-intellectual character of aesthetic judgement.¹⁰⁸ We also see in Cicero a whole lexicon which discusses verbal ornament as an applied thing—where the language of light develops into the language of artefacts; treasures, artworks, garlands—which all 'illuminate' what they adorn.¹⁰⁹ Cicero indeed states the essence of oratory to be the 'illumination' of thought.¹¹⁰ The description of verbal embellishment in terms of luxury artefacts also means that ornament starts to be regarded as a thing in itself, and to acquire some kind of historical significance, as something considered precious because it was used

106 On the malleable nature of speech, so soft and flexible that it goes however you turn it, see *Orator* 16.52: "oratio mollis et tenera et ita flexibilis, ut sequatur quocumque torqueas". Cf. Quintilian x.5.9 on refashioning *sententiae* like forms in wax.

107 Wardy, *Birth of Rhetoric*, 97–103, however reads *De oratore* as an "evasive", "anodyne" or "middle-brow Isocratean" version of Gorgianic rhetoric. See Struever, *Language of History*, 29, on the congruence of cosmic structure, mind and language as derived from the Stoic *logos spermatikos* as sole creative principle in nature.

108 Similarly detailed discussions of the judgement of sense appear in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *On Literary Composition*.

109 On the development of this lexicon, see Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, esp. 47–54, on Cicero's use of *color*, which came to mean shading argument in schools of declamation. For reference to garlands, see *Orator* 6.21 on the tempered style, where modest ornaments are worked in to speech like posies (*toros*) into a garland.

110 *Orator* 39.136, "nec quicquam est aliud dicere nisi aut omnis aut certe plerasque aliqua specie illuminare sententias".

by certain authors, for example. Here we see the development of the treatment of ornament as a precious fragment or a historicist token which will have important subsequent developments.¹¹¹

The decorous, occasional and cosmetic character of ornament is described visually in the analogies of speech or style as a garment, a favoured topos of the rhetorical tradition.¹¹² Visualisation also appears in the related image of speech as a body developed by Cicero. In *Brutus* 9.36 he speaks of oratory in its flowering in Athens as having “uncorrupted blood” and needing no rouge (*fucatus nitor*), suggesting the ambiguity of the ‘colours’ and ‘lights’ of speech as intrinsic excellence or cosmetics concealing a lack of vigour.¹¹³ The most suggestive use of the body of speech topos lies not only in the implied *energeia* but in the association of *schemata* or *figurae* with posture and gesture, developed in Quintilian. Quintilian compares the figures to the attitude (*habitus*) in which bodies are necessarily placed; he includes grammatical inflection, gesture and number in the figural ‘arrangement’ of speech.¹¹⁴ With Quintilian,

111 Cicero refers twice to Lucilius’ metaphor of mosaic (“in vermiculo emblemata”), in *Brutus* 79.274 and *Orator* 44.149; in *Brutus* it praises distinctness while the *Orator* passage is a criticism of preciousness.

112 See *De oratore* 1.43.142 on “vestire atque ornare”; *Brutus* 75.262 on Caesar’s *Commentaries* as nude figures, straight and beautiful, bare of ornament as of a garment; *ibid.*, 79.274 on Marius Calpidius, whose speech clothes his thought (*sententias*) like a soft and translucent garment; Quintilian VIII, preface 18–20 on body and dress; XI.1.3 on indecorous ornament as female dress on men, or triumphal dress on women.

113 The association of sound health with Attic oratory appears throughout *Brutus* (see 13.51), despite Cicero’s critical treatment of contemporary Atticism at 82.284–84.291; the spread of eloquence to Asia is presented as a decline, despite the qualified praise of Asiatic style at 94.325–6. See *Orator* 9.28 for further criticism of Roman “Atticism” conceived as precise thought presented in unpolished style. In *De optime genere oratorum* IV.12 Cicero notes that Attic oratory could include ornate and copious style as well as spare style. See *Orator* 23.78–79 for the frequently quoted comparison of *subtilis oratio* to women whose elegance lies in their lack of overt ornament and cosmetics; this is not a lack of ornament but a careful artifice of simplicity, a “diligent negligence” (“quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens”). At *Brutus* 16.64 the oratory of Lysias, the exemplar of Attic style, is described as lean yet muscular and admired for its *subtilitas*, denoting physical fineness, mental penetration and rhetorical plainness. See Quintilian VIII.3.7 on sound health and properly adorned speech, contrasted with effeminate smoothness and cosmetics.

114 Quintilian IX.1–IX.3 and II.13.8–14, for the famous allusion to the *Discobolos* of Myron. In twelfth and thirteenth century poetics, the trope-figure distinction develops into the distinction between *ornatus difficilis* or *difficultas ornata*, involving tropes, and *sermo levis* or *ornatus facilis*, consisting in the ‘colours’ of speech and thought, in variation of case, transposition of letters, variation of vowels or joining of a verb to a verbal noun. See

ornament as the qualification of speech seems to appear as soon as there is any composition of words; even the theme of illumination and praise is secondary to this habitual conception of the *figurae*, underpinned by the language-body analogy.

The range of terms for ornament in Cicero suggests Hellenistic influence, both literary and artistic—in which the stupendous displays of late Republican triumphs might be included.¹¹⁵ The history of rhetoric is conceived by both Cicero in *Brutus* and Quintilian xii.10 by analogy with the history of sculpture and painting as a progression to increased *veritas* or verity.¹¹⁶ Similar analogies in Dionysius are used in the distinction of styles, and focus as we saw on modes of illusion.¹¹⁷ In *Orator*, which deals with the question of exemplars and prototypes, the analogy with visual art is used to emphasise the variety of talent and taste, as well as the artist's mental image as a Platonic idea.¹¹⁸

Cicero enriches the comparisons of rhetorical ornament with visual art present in earlier extant rhetorical treatises. These could be used to discuss vices, as in Plato's analogy between sophistry and fantastic mimesis or Dionysius'

Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e et XIII^e siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1962), 86–98, and for presentation of Ekkehard iv, *De lege dictamen ornandi*; Matthieu de Vendome, *Ars versificatoria* 11–111; Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova* iv, *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* 11.3 and *De coloribus rhetoricis*; Évrard the German, *Laborintus* 343–598; John of Garland, *Poetria* vi.

- 115 Pliny, NH vii.30.117 reports Caesar's praise of Cicero as "omnium triumphorum laurea maior". In *Brutus* 73.255–57 Cicero compares the acclaim won by eloquence favourably with the triumphs awarded to "minutis imperatoribus" for storming provincial outposts ("castellanos triumphos"). The influence of Hellenistic art on Rome was associated with spectacular displays of triumphal booty that followed the conquest of Greece. Rome becomes from the second century BCE a centre for Hellenistic art, from the victories of the late third century to the defeat of Corinth in 146. These victories included Marcellus' siege of Syracuse (213–211) and Aemilius Paullus' defeat of Perseus of Macedonia (167), which occasioned spectacular triumphs and the importation of Greek art to Rome.
- 116 See *Brutus* 18.70–72, 19.75, 86.296. *Brutus* 86.296 compares Cicero to Lysippos. Webster, *Hellenistic Art*, 201, notes that the sculptors mentioned by Cicero (Canachus, Calamis, Myron, Polykleitos) correspond to those copied by the more academic Neo-Attic artists. On verity see *Brutus* 30.116 on simple oratory compared to the quiet, unaffected actors in *comedia stataria*: "illa simplex in agendo veritas, non molesta".
- 117 See Dionysius, *Thucydides* 4 on artists' judgement of other artists in analogy with his own criticism, as a historian, of Thucydides.
- 118 *Orator* 2.5 on the merit of various artists in their own class; *ibid.*, 2.8–9 on Phidias' models as forms of beauty (*species pulchritudinis eximia*) formed in his mind; *ibid.*, 11.36 on diversity of taste in painting as in literature, using terms which reflect rhetorical styles (*horrida inculta; nitida collustrata*).

critical comparisons of 'sophistic' over-embellishment to precious, artful or exaggerated relief. Dionysius also regards the judgement of sense as the basis for analogies between literary and artistic criticism: the ear craves pleasure and beauty like the eye, which is satisfied and delighted when it finds moulded figures (*plasmata*), pictures, carvings and other artefacts.¹¹⁹ Demetrius likens ornaments in grandiloquent style to architectural decorations—cornices, triglyphs and to purple bands.¹²⁰ The *Ad Herennium* gives the longest book of the treatise to *ornatus*, and the treatment of figures of speech, which the author terms *exornationes* (*figura* is reserved for the three kinds of style, high, middle and simple).¹²¹ *Exornationes* are described in visual terms, as various ornaments, notably metaphor, are said to place things before the eyes, as Aristotle also noted.¹²² The other terms which are said in *Ad Herennium* to place things before the eyes are other figures of comparison or description of particulars: simile (*similitudo*), exemplar, delineation of character (*notatio*) and ocular demonstration or *enargeia*. This list is expanded by subsequent writers to include *evidentia*, *illustratio*, *repraesentatio*, *demonstratio*, *descriptio*, *sub oculis subiectio*, *hypotypōsis*, *diatypōsis* and *ekphrasis*, which will later become associated exclusively with literary description of artworks.¹²³ The metaphor of combat, developed in Cicero and Quintilian, appears at *Ad Herennium* IV.19.26 where the distinction between *membrum orationis* i.e. clause or colon (*kōlon*) and phrase or comma (*articulus*, translating *komma*) is compared to a sword which enters the body with the arm drawn back and hand whirling as opposed to a body pierced by quick, repeated thrusts.

The metaphor of visual art also appears in the counsel not to overuse figures: at *Ad Her.* IV.11.16 the sparing use of figures makes speech "distinctam, sicut coloribus" while the frequent application by contrast makes it "obliquam".¹²⁴ Caplan translates *distinctam* as "relief", and notes the variant reading of *oblitam* for *obliquam*, which he translates as "overloaded or overdaubed". Whichever reading is chosen, the range of allusion is clear, between

119 *On Literary Composition* 10.

120 *On style* 108, in discussion of epiphonema.

121 For the tropes and figures derived from *Ad Herennium* used in Medieval Poetics, see Faral, *Arts poétiques*, 52–54.

122 *Ad Herennium* IV.34, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

123 See Vasaly, *Representations*, 90–104.

124 Cf. *Brutus* 87.298 where Cicero defends Cato's 'rude' and 'unpolished' style by saying that his "drawing" (*lineamenta*) was sharp, and lacked only the colour and "flower" (i.e. splendour or embellishment) of paints (*pigmentorum*) which were not yet invented. The metaphor is used of the declining eloquence of Hortensius, compared to the fading of colours in an old picture (*Brutus* 92.320).

clear and confused perception of an artwork. This echoes the scenographic analogy in Aristotle *Rhetoric* III.12.5, 1414a when he contrasts the finish of demonstrative and forensic speeches, comparing them to paintings made to be seen from a distance (*skiagraphia*), which may appear rough viewed close up, and painting made for close scrutiny. The analogy is repeated by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and by Horace in *Ars poetica* 361–65, with reference to the distinction between speech designed for a large public and that designed for critical connoisseurship.¹²⁵

Again we should be aware of the scenographic aspect to the visual analogies; ornament is concerned with making things appear most advantageously in a given situation. In the language of the rhetorical treatises, ornament brightens things as they present themselves to us in a given context. This point is made explicitly by Quintilian in his comparison of figures of speech to the variation of postures in visual art, where flexion and turning also implies foreshortening and optical correction.¹²⁶ When the author of *Ad Herennium* repeats that the *exornationes* should be worked into speech in a selective and varied way, he says that speech will be brightened with “striking lights”, “luminibus distinctis inlustrabimus orationem”.¹²⁷ Reverting to ‘cosmic’ allusions as a paradigm for proper usage of ornament, Cicero says that the calmly flowing speech of Demetrius of Phaleron is “lit up by metaphors as though by stars”.¹²⁸ The ‘lights’ of ornament are however more frequently discussed in terms of artifice, as in Cicero’s comparison of the effect of Caesar’s use of *oratoria ornamenta* to well-painted pictures placed in good light or in his description of the “lumina quae vocant Graeci σχήματα” as decorative designs, “insignibus in ornatu” which highlight speech.¹²⁹ Still closer to theatre, he compares the ornaments of speech to the decorations of the stage or forum: “similia illis quae in amplo ornatu scaenae aut fori appellantur insignia”.¹³⁰ Such *insignia* do not merely embellish, but stand out, “non quia sola ornent sed quod excellent”.¹³¹

125 See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 44–45, for discussion of Horace’s distinction and its subsequent deformation in Medieval poetics.

126 Quintilian II.13.8–13.

127 *Ad Her.* IV.23.32. This is the author’s only reference to illumination in discussion of the ornaments of speech.

128 *Orator* 27.92; cf. *De oratore* III.43.170 where metaphor is said to light up speech as though with stars; III.40.160–61 on metaphor’s visual efficacy.

129 *Brutus* 75.261; 79.275 on Calidius. Cf. *Orator* 39.134–35 on ornaments as *lumina*.

130 *Ibid.*, 39.135.

131 *Ibid.*

The other use of 'light' as ornament in rhetorical treatises refers to the effects caused by movement. The brightness of these oratorical lights is generated by movement and aimed at arousing an emotional response—*perturbationes*—in the audience. This is particularly clear in Quintilian, who notes the brightening effect of ornament on speech ("qui haec nitidiora faciat").¹³² He counts it the great praise of metaphor that it shines with its own light no matter how brilliant its context.¹³³ This added gleam is not just an exterior gilding but a kind of brilliance within language itself, in which outer splendour is intimately linked with the incandescence or grace of energetic enactment. The notion of a brilliant surface and movement appears also in the topos of eloquent speech as a river, as in Dionysius' allusion to Plato's plain style as "the most diaphanous of streams". Dionysius' image suggests limpidity and perspicuity while the river topos could also be handled to describe vehement or grand style as the thunder of a cascade or a flood which sweeps all before it.¹³⁴

Quintilian's most striking metaphors of light and movement refer to the handling of arms, alluding to the agonistic character of rhetoric. *Ornatus* is characterised as accoutrement in descriptions of eloquence as a speech fought with strong and shining swords ("nec fortibus modo, sed etiam fulgentibus armis").¹³⁵ He pursues the metaphor with the image of the flashing sword whose movement and effulgence, as much as its destructive power, strikes us with terror; splendour is linked with efficacious movement.¹³⁶ The movement created by the ornament of speech can also be intellectual, as Cicero remarks the pleasure of the mind's movement between two objects of comparison in metaphor.¹³⁷

132 Quintilian VIII.3.62: "ornatum est, quod perspicuo ac probabili plus est. Eius primi gradus sunt in eo quod velis concipiendo et exprimendo, tertius, qui haec nitidiora faciat": "ornament is something which goes beyond what is merely lucid and acceptable. It consists firstly in forming a clear conception of what we wish to say, secondly in giving it this adequate expression and thirdly in lending it additional brilliance (*nitidiora*) a process which may correctly be termed embellishment", translation of H.E. Butler.

133 Quintilian VIII.6.4 "in oratione quamlibet clara proprio tamen lumine eluceat".

134 See Cicero, *Orator* 28.97; Quintilian XII.10.64 on Odysseus' speech as a river swollen with winter snows; the image is reused by Erasmus in *De copia*.

135 Quintilian VIII.3.2.

136 Ibid., VIII.3.5 on the terror which the sword brings to the eye, which Quintilian likens to lightning, whose flash (*fulgor*) we fear as much as its strength.

137 *Orator* 39.134; cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III.10.2–4 on the pleasure in the information given by metaphor.

In distinguishing rhetorical from poetic ornamentation, Quintilian contrasts the terrifying flash of arms, dazzling to the mind and eye, with unwarlike gold and silver, which bring danger to their possessors.¹³⁸ In later antiquity, such jewelled qualities would become commonplace for style, resulting in the praise of mosaic and dazzling artefacts.¹³⁹ *Enargeia*, the vivid visualisation seen by Quintilian as the greatest virtue of rhetorical ornament, comes from the root **arg-* and is related to the adjective *argos* used to describe the shining light, and the rapid motion that causes flickering light (in Homer it is the epithet of swift-footed dogs—*podas argoi*, *Il.* XVIII.579).¹⁴⁰ Quintilian, like ‘Longinus’, derives the force of *enargeia* from the power of the fantasy to affect us by representations of absent or non-existent things as though they were present and real.¹⁴¹ At the basis of this power is the selection of accidental qualities which renders things credible, as Demetrius and Dionysius remind us when they call *enargeia* a virtue of the clarity of ‘simple’ style. Quintilian in his first discussion of *enargeia* speaks explicitly of “claritas . . . ex accidentibus”.¹⁴² Quintilian’s association of vividness with activity brings *enargeia* close to *energeia*, the illusion of the actuality or activity through which a thing accomplishes its purpose. We see in Quintilian the perception of ornament as quality or mode, as noted in his comparison of *figurae* to the ‘attitudes’ in which the body must be.

The ‘added light’ of the ornaments of speech thus highlights words like relief in a painting, visualises them in the imagination of the orator and audience (*enargeia*), makes them seem to flash, move or live (*energeia*). Thus Quintilian

138 Quintilian x.1.30 “fulgorem . . . qui terreat, qualis est in ferri, quo mens simulque visusque praestringitur, non qualis auri argentine, imbellis et potius habenti periculosus”.

139 Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 52–3, cites Martial, *Epigrams* 5.11 as the first reference to jewelled style and Tacitus *Dialogus* 22.4, on modern style, which should be rich, with gold and jewels; by the fourth and fifth centuries, *floridus* and *gemmeus* are conflated. Roberts quotes Symmachus, *Epist.* 3.12.2 to orator the Naucellius on his writings “patched [*segmentatae*] with the gold of Tully” (*Jeweled Style*, 116).

140 Quintilian vi. 2.32. The Homeric epithet occurs in the *ekphrasis* of the shield of Achilles. For discussion of Greek colour words (including *argos*) as originating in verbs, and signifying speed or motion, see Schwarzenburg, “Colour”, 15–34, esp. 25 on *aithones* (weapons) and *aither*, the eternally bright heaven.

141 On *enargeia* in Quintilian and ‘Longinus’ and descriptions of artworks from the second to the sixth century where the viewer’s imaginative play becomes central, see John Onians, “Abstraction and Imagination in Late Antiquity”, *Art History* 3, no. 1 (1980): 1–24, repr. in *Art, Nature and Culture: From Art History to World Art Studies* (London: Pindar Press, 2006), 185–214.

142 Quintilian viii.3.70.

says that in oratorical performance everything lives and moves, and we watch its birth with joy and care.¹⁴³ These 'lights' and 'births' are both qualities produced by the orator, likened to swordsman, athlete or actor, and affects that arise from the experience of the audience.¹⁴⁴ Quintilian's comments on *enargeia* as a product of the fantasy add further detail to the association of ornament with fantastic mimesis and its sophistic practitioners. He speaks of the *phantasiai* as central to speaking, as they keep images of thoughts in the mind and heart; this recalls Aristotle's comments on the derivation of fantasy from *phaos*, light.¹⁴⁵ Fantasy is the key to rendering vivid, circumstantial descriptions which come to life before the audiences' eyes, and to the speaker's and audience's emotional engagement. Similarly, in 'Longinus' *On the sublime* the great quality of sublimity comes from the vividness and force of images which the reader seems to see.¹⁴⁶ In an important passage at 15.1 he speaks of *phantasia* as the source of weight, grandeur and energy; fantasies (*phantasiai*) are first said to be mental pictures, then any idea (*ennoēma*) that engenders speech, and finally qualified as things said, inspired by emotion (*enthusias-mou . . . pathous*), so that you seem to see things and place them before the eyes of your audience. In oratory, the effect sought is *enargeia*, in poetry, enthrallment (*ekplēxis*) although both aim at clarity and arousal of feeling.¹⁴⁷ In this passage we have one of the steps which shows fantasy and its illusions linked with apparent inspiration and thought. *Phantasia* is also treated here not as a mental faculty but as an artistic mode. While use of 'Longinus' in Renaissance treatises appears sparse (despite Robortello's Basel 1554 edition), we see here

143 Ibid., x.1.16.

144 For the orator as swordsman, see *Ad Her.* IV.19.26; Quintilian x.1.106; as athlete, *De oratore* III.59.220; *Orator* 67.228–29, 56.186; *Brutus* 69.243; *De optimo genere oratorum* III.8; Quintilian IX.4.8–9, x.1.4. On the orator as actor, see Quintilian XI.3.89; *Brutus* 2.6 on the forum as stage; *ibid.*, 30.116 on *comoedia stataria*; 55.203 on Sulpicius, master of grand style, as "tragicus orator"; 84.290. In *Orator* 3.14, philosophy is said to be for orators what physical training is for actors.

145 Quintilian x.7.15; Aristotle, *De anima* III.3 429a1–8.

146 'Longinus', *On the sublime* 9.6–7, on the Battle of Gods, which presents the images (*phantasmata*) of a theomachy so that the reader sees them; the passage is however said to require allegorical interpretation, as it is otherwise irreligious and indecorous. For fantasy as a quality shared by painting and poetry, see the Proemium 6 to the *Imagines* of Philostratus the Younger.

147 At 15.8 'Longinus' shows a preference for the oratorical *phantasia* as less incredible and more verisimilar. At 15.11 he notes that the effect of *phantasia* is to draw attention from reasoning (*apodeiktikon*) to the enthralling effect of the imagination, so that technique is concealed in a "halo of brilliance" (*perilampomenon*).

the kind of association which will reappear in Renaissance conflation of fantasy and the artist's 'idea'.

Cicero develops the association between sophistry and ornament in *Orator* when he speaks of epideictic, used for panegyrics or praises, descriptions or histories, as proper to Sophists.¹⁴⁸ This association appears also in Dionysius, where it is developed negatively in his exaltation of Attic 'simplicity' and condemnation of Gorgias as the ancestor of Asiatic speech.¹⁴⁹ Both Dionysius and Cicero associate sophistic rhetoric with the middle style of speech, also practised by philosophers such as Demetrius of Phaleron.¹⁵⁰ Quintilian continues the tradition when he speaks of Demetrius' style as a multi-coloured robe, unsuited to the dust of the forum; the robe suggests an allusion to *poikilia*.¹⁵¹ It is the Sophists (and historians influenced by them), not the poets, whom Cicero associates with the *flores* of ornate speech, with interwoven fables and metaphor used like colour.¹⁵² The Sophists are thus firmly linked by Cicero with the creation of consciously artificial, 'artistic' speech, where ornamentation is used in the fashioning of a verbal artefact. Epideictic, the sophistic genre *par excellence*, is characterised for Cicero by its *concininitas*, its *copia verborum*, its elaborate patterning of words and contrasts—a motif of Gorgianic origin.¹⁵³

Demetrius linked epideictic subjects such as descriptions of gardens, nymphs, *erotes* and weddings with the ornaments of the elegant style. The characteristic themes of *ekphraseis* in Silver Age Latin prose rehearse a similar range

148 *Orator* 9.37–13.42.

149 Dionysius, *Lysias* 3.

150 *Orator* 27.95–96. Much later, Augustine in *De doctrina christiana* discusses middle style as appropriate to a Christian orator; see Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 125–27.

151 Quintilian x.1.33, "versicolor . . . vestem". The multi-coloured robe is contrasted with the soldier's strong arm.

152 *Orator* 19.65–20.66. See Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 48–51, for references to *flos* and its use for small-scale variation, use of tropes, figures, uncommon words—again associated with sophistic style. He notes that Quintilian avoids this sense of *flos*, and refers disparagingly to flowerets (*flosculis*) of excessively embellished declamation his day. Roberts discusses later uses of *flores* to mean *ornatus* in Ammianus Marcellinus, Symmachus, Jerome, Claudian, Paulinus, Macrobius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Ennodius, Venantius Fortunatus and Isidore; Sidonius, *Ep.* 9.13.2, ll.12–13 speaks of Horace's poems as blooming with many-coloured flowers of words. Roberts gives references for the topos of the poem, or book of poems as a meadow of springtime flowers in Apuleius, Prudentius, Claudian, Reposianus, Lucretius and Paulinus; Sidonius uses it of Statius' *Silvae* where the meadows are jewelled.

153 For epideictic as the kind of rhetoric most suited to amplification, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.9.40, 1368a; *Rhet. ad Alex.* 1426b.

of themes: descriptions of pleasant landscapes, journeys, elegant buildings, good weather, beautiful girls and attractive animals, plus their contraries.¹⁵⁴ For Quintilian, poetry is epideictic: “genus ostentationi comparatum”.¹⁵⁵ Cicero links epideictic to processions (*pompae*), thus pointing to the association between occasions of praise and spectacle, and suggesting the role of visual ‘display’ in epideictic. If ‘elegant’ and ekphrastic themes are shared by poetry and epideictic, they also suggest the subjects of the imaginary paintings described by the writers of the Second Sophistic, such as the Philostrati. sophistic preciousness could turn even solemn evocations of *kosmos* into encomiastic artifice, as when Apuleius describes the celestial chorus “adorned and crowned” as “a necklace of the world”, with “variegated bas-reliefs glittering with marvellous fire”.¹⁵⁶

Cicero’s attention to the patterning created by symmetry in periods and pairing of contrasts (antithesis) in sophistic rhetoric recalls Gorgias’ *Helen* with its opening contrast of *kosmos* and *akosmia*. The patterning of contraries becomes in sophistic epideictic a mere decorative effect, whose end is entertainment (“ad voluptates aurium”, *Orator* 12.38) and whose preciousness Cicero notes.¹⁵⁷ The overworked character of antitheses and rhythmic pattern for Cicero marks a limitation in sophistic epideictic, which he however calls the nurse (*nutrix*) of the ideal orator of *Orator*.¹⁵⁸ By making rhythm artificial and contrived, the Sophists have trivialised it into a showpiece of verbal dexterity,

154 Vasaly, *Representations*, 91, gives a list from Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI Jahrhundert vor Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898): sunrises and sunsets, a calm sea, a pleasant journey, a lovely girl, a grove, a charming house or villa, temple, church or painting, a splendid animal or their opposites—horrid caves, the terrors of the ocean, storm and shipwreck, torments, murders.

155 Quintilian x.1.28.

156 “caeli chorus compatum et coronatum suda tempestate visimus, pictis noctibus severa gratia, torvo decore, suspicientes in hoc perfectissimo mundi, ut ait Ennius, clipeo miris fulgoribus variata caelamina” *De deo Socratis* 11.121, in Miller, *Measures*, 89, who calls Apuleius’ metaphor “a decorative frieze in a sumptuous cosmic villa”. Apuleius, *De mundo* 29.355 calls the choral dance of the stars a “necklace-like ornament”: “hoc ornatum et [vel] ut monile κόσμος rectissime Graeca lingua significat”, discussed Miller, *Measures*, 252.

157 See *Orator* 12.39 on the miniature, overworked character of sophistic epideictic: “versiculorum similia quaedam nimiumque depicta”. Demetrius notes affectation as the vice of elegant style.

158 *Orator* 11.37.

like the antithetical word play deployed as a surface embellishment.¹⁵⁹ Cicero calls the middle style which he derives from the Sophists as “florens”, “pictum” and “expolitum” and unsuited for the forensic purposes of the ‘simple’ style or the political force of grand manner.¹⁶⁰ It is linked with pleasure and leisure, and hence with the retired, tranquil character of philosophical debate as well as sophistic word-play.¹⁶¹ Cicero speaks of Demetrius of Phaleron, his exemplar for philosophical eloquence, set in the sequestered *umbraculis* of philosophic repose.¹⁶²

For Demetrius, Dionysius, Cicero and Quintilian, all kinds of speech involve ornament, and all discuss the effects and character of ornament in visual terms. Beyond this general requirement, Dionysius and Cicero however delineate a particular area of ornateness, which they associate with sophistic rhetoric and with the middle style. What unites the diverse practitioners of this ornate rhetoric—philosophers, sophists, poets—is their disengagement from legal and political persuasion, and their association with pleasure or repose. Absolved of the duty of compelling their listeners’ assent, they embroider their style. Dionysius and Cicero describe the style of Plato and Theophrastus through metaphors of the *locus amoenus* that suggest the content of poetic works. Despite Cicero’s calls for the union of argument and eloquence in *De oratore*, his critical approach shows the division of style and content. This appears in a more extreme form in Dionysius, with his extraordinary reading of a Plato seduced by sophistry. The outcome of Dionysius’ approach is the notion

159 Ibid., 25.84 cautions against the “studied charms” (*quaesitae venustates*) produced by parallelism and *elaborata concinnitas* which make the grasping after delight too apparent.

160 Ibid., 27.96.

161 Jaeger, *Paideia* III, 49, notes that the term ‘sophist’ for Isocrates could be used equally of the Sophists and Socrates, Plato and their followers. At *Orator* 29.62–64, the speech of philosophers removed from the need to arouse or captivate an audience, is likened to a chaste maiden (“*casta verecunda virgo incorrupta*”). This middle style is not oratory, but conversation (*locutio*), carried out amongst scholars which aims to soothe rather than arouse the mind (“*locuntur cum doctis quorum sedare animos malunt quam incitare*”).

162 *Brutus* 9.37–38, where the sheltered life of the philosophical schools is said to be reflected in the soft and pliable style in speech. *De legibus* III.6.14 by contrast states that Demetrius brought philosophic rhetoric “*ex umbraculis eruditorum atque otio*” into the arena of public life. For philosophic speech as *mollis* and *umbratilis*, see *Orator* 19.64; *De divinatione* I.13.22 on the “*Academia umbrifera*” and *Tusculan Disputations* II.11.27 for the enervating effects of the poets who encourage decay in household discipline and delicate living: “*ad malam domesticam disciplinam vitamque umbratilem et delicatam cum accesserunt etiam poetae, nervos omnes virtutis elidunt*”. The term *umbratilis* reappears in Walter Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), where it denotes “unworldly” aesthetic withdrawal.

of a surface of speech, qualified by 'bloom', 'patina' or other aging effects, or else coloured to give the illusion of relief. Dionysius and Cicero build up associations between ornate style and decorated objects, namely objects which possess *poikilia*.¹⁶³

Poikilia is a significant term here, with a range of meaning less apparent in its usual Latin equivalent, *varietas*. *Poikilia* and related forms are used of colour, of multicoloured things, often to signal variegation of a surface by colour, whether in nature (striped, multi-coloured skin or fur, or patterning caused by light) or by art, as in embroidery, mosaic, painting or tapestry.¹⁶⁴ Such associations are translated into rhetorical discussions of coloured or embroidered speech. In Pindar it is used of hymn and the lyre, as well as of dappled surfaces (e.g. snakes) and embroidered things or speech, and in Plato, beyond similar references, the word is used of the stars as ornament of the heavens, of music, as a negative metaphor for democracy (inter alia *Tim.* 40a; *Rep.* 404e, 529b–e, 557c, 558c, 559d, 604e; *Laws* VII.812d).¹⁶⁵ The majority of usages, as listed by Stephanus, however concern qualification, especially accidental qualification, of colour. Cicero notes a similar extension of significance in *De finibus* II.3 where he comments that *varietas* is used properly of different colours (*disparibus coloribus*) but is transferred metaphorically to speak of other things: a poem, a speech, customs, fortune or pleasure.¹⁶⁶ Thus *poikilia* can be used to describe the differences within a quality in a species or an individual substance; Stephanus also shows that it is used in the senses of *maculosus* or *pictus*, suggesting diversification in the surface appearance of an individual thing which is 'painted' with variety. An anonymous example given by Demetrius of charming style, "the earth with her many garlands is painted

163 Dionysius uses it of the 'Protean' speech of Demosthenes.

164 For a range of usages, see Stephanus *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* VI, cols. 1309–1317.

165 At *Tim.* 40a *pepoikilomenon* is used of *kosmon* with an overt play on its meanings of adornment and universe. In *Republic* *poikilia* is used in condemnation of musical variety which produces licentiousness or disease, with analogy to food; this analogy is developed in the metaphor of the embroidered, multi-coloured garment (presumably in allusion to the peplos of Athena) for democracy at *Rep.* 557c ff. Philo uses the verb *poikillein* of the variegated ornament of the plants compared to an artist's use of colour and of the stars (*On the creation* 41, 45); see Runia, *ibid.*, 188–89 for comment. Runia notes the primary association of *poikilia* with craftsmanship and its comparison with the heavens in Plato, *Rep.* 529d; *Tim.* 39d, 40a; pseudo-Plato *Epin.* 977b4; Euripides, *Helen* 1096; Philo *De somnis* 1.203–07; Philo *Special Laws* 1.16.84.

166 The passage concerns the definition of pleasure in Epicurean thought.

with variety" (*poikilletai men gaia polystephanos*) suggests the rhetorical background to Christian celebrations of *ornatus mundi*.¹⁶⁷

Poikilia in short is used of surfaces embellished by variegation, including deployment of light and shadow for illusionist ends. In nature the dappled skin of the serpent is an example; in art, the play of light and shadow creates fantastic mimesis. The comments of Dionysius and Cicero reveal the continuity that was seen to lie between sophistic rhetoric, epideictic and poetry. They also show the ancient literary background to something noted by Summers and Wohl in Renaissance art and art theory: the relation between ornament, surface embellishment and the illusion of relief.¹⁶⁸

Quintilian is less engaged with the discussion of ornament as embellished, artificial surface. The metaphors of body and equipment dominate, resulting in a discussion of ornament which is not only qualitative but instrumental and modal. Quintilian's view of ornament is dominated by his notion of a body of speech, which is both metaphoric and actual, as rhetoric is realised in the performance of *actio*, where thought is enacted in *sermo corporis*.¹⁶⁹ Cicero and Quintilian quote Demosthenes, who called *actio* the most important element in oratory.¹⁷⁰ *Actio* incarnates the metaphorical body of the union of wisdom and eloquence in the real body of the orator in the performance of decorum—thus Cicero says that the posture and movement of Antonius seemed to agree with the course of his thought even more than his words.¹⁷¹ This emphasis on the enactment of inward through outward movement (emotion through motion), constitutes part of the importance of rhetoric for the arts.

The dual emphasis on the physical movement of performance and the metaphor of physical movement shapes Quintilian's choice of terms for ornament. We have seen that he is less interested in the artefact than the instrument,

167 Demetrius 164.

168 Summers, *Michelangelo*, 41–55; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 76–114.

169 For *actio* as “quasi sermo” or “eloquentia... corporis”, see Cicero, *De oratore* III.222; *Orator* 55, cited by Quintilian, XI.3.1. The hands are the most eloquent speakers of the body; Quintilian XI.3.85–87 speaks of their *verborum copia* and lists their verbal, adverbial and pronominal indications, calling them the “common language of humankind”. At XI.3.92–120 comes a list of hand gestures; other gestures, and details for dress follow, including the appropriate modes of disordering the toga expressively in the course of speech (XI.3.144–49, XI.3.161–74).

170 Quintilian, XI.3.6; Cicero, *Brutus* 37.142, where he describes the persuasive force of performance: “Nothing else so penetrates the mind, shapes, moulds, turns it, and causes the orator to seem such a man as he will” “Nulla res magis penetrat in animos eosque fingit format flectit talisque oratores videri facit, qualis se videri volunt”.

171 *Brutus* 37.141 “gestus erat non verba exprimens, sed cum sententiis congruens”.

and the instrument used in certain ways; not the sword but the sword flashing through the air. It is in Quintilian that *gratia* becomes significant, appearing in discussion of *actio*, *gestio* and the *figurae*.¹⁷² The resonance of *gratia* as an ornament denoting outwards expression or movement will become expanded in Renaissance treatises, culminating in Lomazzo's discussion of *linea serpentinata*.¹⁷³ Quintilian's most celebrated discussion of an artwork is his allusion to the *Discobolos* of Myron (II.13.8–14) in his comparison of the figures of speech to the graceful torsions and postures depicted by artists. The varied *habitus* (including posture, dress and expression) which Quintilian terms *flexus* or *motus* produces action and emotion; the affective quality of this *motus* may lie in *not* representing certain things, so that the viewer has to supply them in imagination.¹⁷⁴ Quintilian thus relates grace as figural flexion to the fantasy, which appears again in his discussion of ornament.

Quintilian's conception of ornament of speech thus views it as accidental qualification—alteration of posture, expression or dress—and as *energeia*, the activity of actualisation. The two come together in Quintilian's repeated descriptions of qualified movement: the flash of the moving sword, the grace of the body flexed in action. Quintilian describes the ornament of speech as though it were adverbial and modal, and his descriptions make little distinction between accidental change and actuality. This will be his legacy to Renaissance conceptions of ornament, with Lomazzo's recourse to the flame as paradigm for *linea serpentinata* an attempt to provide an essential, elemental form for accidental movement. Quintilian thus presents accidental qualification as change and change as movement; this corresponds to an orthodox Aristotelian view of change. Accidental qualification is also for Quintilian rooted in the fantasy and its capacity to form and vary mental pictures; the actualisation he describes is an impression, effect or affect.¹⁷⁵ Here we can see why Quintilian's account of rhetorical ornament is so suggestive for visual art, with its vision of affective images whose qualification is conceived as graceful movement.

172 Quintilian XI.3.4; on figural grace as analogy for the figures of speech, see II.13.9–11. At XI.3.47 he discusses the opening of Cicero's *Pro Milone* in terms of a face which changes expression. In *Orator* 67, Cicero likens rhythmic speech to the movements of trained pugilists and gladiators, which have both vigour and grace, so that what is useful in their combat is also pleasing to look on ("ad aspectam etiam sit venustum").

173 Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* 1.1 (Milan 1584), in *Scritti sulle arti* ed. Roberto Ciardi (Florence: Marchi e Bertolli, 1973–74), II, 29.

174 Quintilian's example is Timanthes' *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*, where Agamemnon is shown with his face veiled; the example is used also by Cicero in *Orator* 74; cf. Pliny, NH XXXV.73.

175 See Quintilian XI.3.67, which notes that mute and unvarying pictures penetrate our inmost feelings so that they seem even more powerful than speech.



FIGURE 2.2 *Hadrianic copy of Discobolos of Myron, 2nd century CE* (“Castelporziano Discobolos”). Rome, National Museum at Palazzo Massimo alle Terme.

PHOTO: MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO—
SOPRAINTENDENZA SPECIALE PER I BENI ARCHEOLOGICI DI ROMA.

Decorum and ornament in Cicero—*De officiis* and *De oratore*

If Cicero notes sophistic cultivation of adorned speech, he also tries to explain the continuous presence of ornament in rhetoric in a way which accounts for its significance as *kosmos*. This appears in his evocation of universal order in the discussion of rhythm in *De oratore* III.45.178–46.181 and in *De officiis* I.

Cicero characterises rhythm, prominent amongst the ornaments of speech, as the embodiment of this harmony.¹⁷⁶ The statement of an indissoluble link between all things in creation and all branches of human knowledge which underlies the union of arguments and words is illustrated at *De oratore* III.45–46 in the descent from the order of the universe to the human body to animals, trees, ships, temples and finally to the divisions of speech—from the cosmic order to the embellishment of speech, the arrangement of each thing embodies the same harmonious arrangement, the same fusion of *utilitas* and *suavitas*.¹⁷⁷ The Stoic sources of *De officiis*, such as Cicero's declared use (or criticism) of Panaetius, have long been noted and we have seen Cicero speak in a similar way in his exposition of the universal order of providence in Stoicism in *De nat. deor.* II. Beyond Stoic treatments of the continuity between universal order and human temperance are Platonic discussions.

In *Timaeus* 47d the human capacity for rhythm and harmony which help the soul “in restoring it to order and concord with itself” imitates the harmony of the world soul whose revolutions are a mimesis of eternity.¹⁷⁸ Closer to Cicero's rhetorical theme is the discussion in *Gorgias* 503c–508b on regularity and orderly arrangement as the virtue of all things, from the products of *technē* to the soul and finally the universe itself. Rhythm, linked by Cicero elsewhere with a circle which brings the phrase to completion and perfection, discovers universal structures of order in the unique and specific order of a speech.¹⁷⁹

In *Gorgias* 503c–508b, Plato described the *kosmos* and *taxis* in things as founded on the *philia*, the concord and great power of “geometric equality”

176 Cicero's attention to rhythm here and in *Orator* is part of his critique of the Roman “Atticists” who did not use rhythm; see *Orator* 234. ‘Longinus’ discusses the transporting effects of rhythm in *On the sublime* 39.3 as reaching from the ears to the soul, and “winning a complete mastery over our minds”.

177 Fumaroli, *L'Âge de l'éloquence*, 50, remarks of this passage “Le luxe n'est pas le superflu, mais le nécessaire, la plénitude du nécessaire”.

178 Cf. *Laws* II.664 where rhythm is called an order (*taxis*) of movement of body and voice peculiar to humankind, given to humans by the gods who lead us in our choirs and feasts.

179 “in orbe inclusa currat oratio”, *Orator* 61.207. Cf. *Ibid.*, 59.199, on the ear which awaits and takes pleasure in the period. Demetrius, *On style* 10, discusses the cyclical character of the *periodos*.

in the human and divine realm. In Cicero's account, there are three elements in play: universal order, particular action or artefact and the performance of virtue in decorum and *actio*. Cicero's discussion of decorum in *De officiis* 1 resonates with the Aristotelian conceptions of virtue as a mean, chosen and exercised relative to circumstances. Decorum however is not so much *praxis* as its performance; it therefore pertains to both *praxis* and *technē*. As Cicero notes, decorum involves situations of choice, governed by the appropriate, not the necessary.¹⁸⁰ The problem lies in the way that rhetoric confuses moral action with the artifice of *actio*, and ornament is central to this problem as its attractiveness may persuade us to accept misleading, artificial representations of moral states. The criticisms insist on this point; cosmetically deployed ornament is pernicious as the pleasure it gives seduces us into making bad moral choices. This aspect of moral intent is for Aristotle common to sophists and orators, as opposed to dialecticians, whose arguments are governed by logic.¹⁸¹ Quintilian's repeated injunctions to eschew effeminacy reflect his conception of ornament absorbed into the speaker's *habitus*; once ornament is used for artificial moral portraiture, the appearance of cosmetic allure must be avoided. It is important to distinguish this kind of criticism from the complaints about ornament which appear in the industrial age, concerning falsity to materials or function.

Cicero's writings on rhetoric defend oratory for the reasons that Plato condemns it. He argues that it affirms the particularity of human situations and the shared nature of the bonds, the *communitas*, which underlie human society, manifest in the shared, social character of language. Cicero acknowledges the importance of the philosopher's search for wisdom and tranquillity of soul, and states that oratory is impossible without philosophic competence, which furnishes both material and method. However, he criticises those philosophers who claim to reveal the nature of justice and virtue, while withdrawing from the political activities in which justice and virtue are embodied. In Cicero's view, contempt for public life has led philosophers to a two-fold error; a life passed in retirement or *otium* distorts the sense of relationship between the various spheres of life, in which virtues are actualised in activity or *usus*. Thus philosophy loses sight of the situation of each action in the wider network of relationships that constitutes a community. Thus the division between eloquence and wisdom attributed to Socrates at *De oratore* 111.16.60 is not just a blow at rhetoric but a deeper cut into the organisation of communities through language as the fundamental principle of human cohesion.

180 See *Orator* 22.73–74 on the contrast between *oportere* and *decere*.

181 *Rhetoric* 1.1.14, 1355b.

If Cicero presents himself as the channel of Greek philosophy into the Roman world, part of his task is the transformation of *otium* from philosophical withdrawal into a virtuous form of recreation from public duty, which enables one to re-enter it with deepened theoretical reflection and renewed energy. Thus *otium* as portrayed in his academic writings provides something like a mimetic distance from his philosophic sources, hence the quasi theatrical quality of the setting of dialogues such as *De oratore*.

In the discussion of decorum in *De officiis*, Cicero uses the (sophistic) image of Hercules at the crossroads to illustrate the idea that a life of ethical action is a life of decorum—that is, a life lived in conformity with one's better nature.¹⁸² Decorum, called *ornatus vitae* at *De officiis* 1.27.93, is not so much a thing as an ordering—not an abstract ordering, but one which arises in each particular situation, and cannot be defined apart from it. This said, certain situations may be codified as typical or exemplary, giving rise to the three categories of rhetoric (forensic, judicial and epideictic) which might in turn be considered in relation to other codifications of decorum such as architectural typology.¹⁸³ Decorum manifests itself in the details of every speech and gesture, as well as the proportion and consistency with which we present ourselves in life.

Thus Cicero opens *De officiis* with a discussion of the relation between the order and harmony that is perceived as beautiful, and order in the sense of the virtue which creates and maintains human society. At 1.4.14 he writes that humans are the only animals to possess a sense of order, fittingness and due measure (“unum hoc animal sentit, quod sit ordo, quid sit, quod deceat, in factis dictisque qui modus”). This sense of order is revealed as the sense of beauty and harmony, which translates into the realm of mind as thought and deed:

No other animal has a sense of beauty, loveliness, harmony in the visible world; and Nature and Reason, extending the analogy from the world of sense to the mind, find that beauty, consistency, order are far more to be maintained in thought and deed.¹⁸⁴

182 “Qui igitur ad naturae suae non vitiosae genus consilium vivendi omne contulerit, is constantiam teneat (id quod maxime decet)”. The Hercules image has its origins with Prodicus, recounted by Xenophon, *Memoirs of Socrates* II.1.21–34.

183 The types of rhetoric correspond to three situations (court room, political assembly and oration in praise or blame of a person or thing). On poetic propriety in the delineation of character, see *De officiis* 1.28.97; on architecture, see Vitruvius on *decor* (*De architectura* 1.2.5). The *genera* (later the orders), exhibit an ordering according to decorum which clarifies various situations according to function, tradition and nature, and shows the measure that underlies everything down to the smallest details.

184 *De officiis* 1.4.24, trans. W. Miller (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1913, repr. 1990): “nullum aliud animal pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit;

This harmonious ordering is a sign of the presence of decorum, which Cicero attempts to define in I.27–28.

Decorum is not a virtue, as justice or fortitude or temperance are virtues, but all virtues contain it, and the distinction between a virtue and decorum is, in practice, subtle. Decorum is “cum virtute confusum”, found both in moral virtue as a whole (“quod in omni honestate versatur”) and in the parts of moral goodness. Cicero illustrates this with the metaphor of corporeal beauty, again emphasising the link between aesthetic and ethical harmony: as beauty cannot be divorced from health, so decorum is blended with virtue, although it can be distinguished by thought and cogitation.¹⁸⁵ Pursuing the analogy of the harmonious beauty of the human body, he says:

as physical beauty with harmonious symmetry of the limbs engages the attention and delights the eye, for the very reason that all the parts combine in harmony and grace, so this propriety, which shines out in our conduct, engages the approbation of our fellow-men.¹⁸⁶

Decorum manifests itself in every virtue and every area, from its *officium*, which “leads to harmony with nature and the faithful observance of her laws” (“deducit ad convenientiam conservationemque naturae”) to the minutiae of bodily movement and attitude. Discussion of decorum arises in the context of temperance in which Cicero sees the “maxima vis decori”. In the practice of temperance or self-control, decorum harmonises with nature, but it extends to every deed, word and gesture, where it manifests itself in beauty, order and ornament:

quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandam putat cavetque”.

185 Ibid., I.27.95: “Ut venustas et pulchritudo corporis secerni non potest a valetudine, sic hoc, de quo loquimur, decorum totum illud quidem est cum virtute confusum, sed mente et cogitatione distinguitur”.

186 Ibid., I.28.98: “Ut enim pulchritudo corporis apta compositione membrorum movet oculos et delectat hoc ipso, quod inter se omnes partes cum quodam lepore consentiunt, sic hoc decorum, quod elucet in vita, movet approbationem eorum, quibuscum vivitur”. For comment on this passage, see De Bruyne, *L'Esthétique du Moyen Age* (Louvain: Editions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1947), 33–4, who notes the supererogatory, superabundant quality of decorum and its radiating or illuminating of experience: “le rayonnement extérieur dans le monde de l'expérience”.

Since decorum is discerned in all deeds, words, even in the movement and attitude of the body, it lies in three things—beauty, order and ornament suitable to the activity.¹⁸⁷

Thus decorum pertains to every part of life, and at 1.31.111 Cicero says that if decorum is anything, it is the “uniform consistency in the course of our life as a whole and all its individual actions (*“aequabilitas cum universae vitae, tum singularum actionum”*). Decorum, moreover, must be considered when we ponder the most difficult questions of all—who we are and what we wish to be and what kind of life we follow, a remark which is followed by a reference to Hercules, heroic exemplar of active life, at the crossroads.¹⁸⁸

The representation of goodness and order in terms of beauty and harmony is thus developed into an analogy of the well-proportioned body as a figure for consistency and constancy in the fashioning of public life. Thus we see two dimensions to the *constantia* of decorum; first, it is the ability to present each unique situation as a harmonious whole, as repeatedly described in rhetorical treatises.¹⁸⁹ Second is *aequabilitas* in the course of life pursued, which has its source in conformity with nature. The harmony of ethical life, figured through the well-measured body, finds expression in particular configurations of speech by means of “*formositate, ordine, ornatu ad actionem apto*”. Cicero links ornament firmly to decorum and reconciles its variable, occasional nature with the universal by linking it to temperance.

Cicero moves from the continuity and plenitude of universal ordering to concentrate on the activity of the individual. This Stoic focus on the consistency of moral life suggests a ‘modal’ view of ornament as a way of performing decorum. This is indeed the kind of approach we saw in Quintilian.

If for Plato the basis of human community lies in the intellectual virtues of the soul, for Cicero such virtues remain potential until realised through language. Society is not founded or regulated through the transcendent idea of justice, but through the establishment and enactment of law, and thus the concern of the orator is not so much the metaphysical meaning of things as their significance in terms of a concrete, political situation. To paraphrase Ernesto

187 *De off.* 1.35.126, translation of H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1942): “Sed quoniam decorum illud in omnibus factis, dictis, in corporis denique motu et statu cernitur idque positum est in tribus rebus, formositate, ordine, ornatu ad actionem apto”. Miller renders “ordine, ornatu” as “tact and taste”.

188 *De off.* 1.31.117: “quos nos et quales esse velimus et in quo genere vitae”.

189 Cf. *Orator* 22.74, “Propriety is what is fitting or agreeable to an occasion or a person” (“quasi aptum esse consentaneumque tempori et personae”).

Grassi, the orator, who speaks only in the context of different and particular situations, is concerned with the things (*res*) as they show their usefulness to society, in the context of the *res publica*.¹⁹⁰ The sense of *communitas* as the foundation of human society, linguistic meaning and virtuous action comes from the orator's participation in *res publica*—that is, in finding the cohesion, harmony and measure in the variety and particularity of human circumstances.

Thus Cicero concludes *De officiis* 1 with an unequivocal statement of the primacy of active life over studious retirement, stating that it is more important to act well than to think wisely (“agere considerate pluris sit quam cogitare prudenter”, 1.45.158). What is lost in the subordination of *sapientia* to justice and *communitas* or social instinct is gained through a deeper sense of how the principles of fellowship concern the shared nature of speech and reason (*oratio* and *ratio*), through which the bonds of shared humanity are asserted (1.16.50). If the primary significance of speech is the expression of social instinct, the most important kind of speech is that which best serves the demands of *communitas*, such as law-giving or eloquent speech, which enables it to understand and profit from the studies of the wise. These kinds of speech pertain to the orator—not the courtroom pleader but the statesman in whom the union of wisdom and eloquence becomes the embodiment of an encyclopaedic culture. The encyclopaedic culture reflects the relationships that obtain between the various fields of knowledge.¹⁹¹

Such an orator is delineated in Crassus, mouthpiece of Cicero's own ideal of oratorical wisdom in *De oratore*. The dramatic tension in *De oratore* comes from the contrast between the two principal speakers, Crassus and Antonius, who represent respectively a vision of an all-encompassing eloquence which Quintilian will later formulate as an *encyclos paedeia* and a more pragmatic view of oratory as a “near art” (*quasi artem*) founded on opinion, not wisdom, with a defined and relatively technical character. It is Antonius who expounds the parts of rhetoric which are shared with dialectic (*inventio*, or the finding of arguments, *dispositio* or the arrangement of material).¹⁹² Cicero's treatment of the arts of argument which rhetoric derives from dialectic reworks Aristotle's

190 Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, 9–10.

191 This encyclopaedic culture is manifested by Cicero's writings, encompassing speeches, the achievements of his public career, treatises on oratory as technique and cultural ideal and a series of ethical works which concern public life (*De officiis*), religion (*De natura deorum*, *De divinatione*), the nature of the soul and the ends of human life or happiness itself (*De finibus bonorum et malorum*, *De amicitia*, *Tusculan Disputations*, *Academica*). The thread uniting the *oeuvre* is the emphasis on the communal nature of humane existence and the social character of meaning.

192 To Antonius are also given the discussion of memory, a debate on the conflict between pragmatic and ideal conceptions of oratory, and an excursus on humour.

remarks on enthymeme and example as the proofs which correspond to syllogism and induction in dialectic, on the arguments (*topica*) which can be made about any given theme, and the categories of analysis.¹⁹³ In contrast to Aristotle's presentation of rhetoric as a cruder and more popular counterpart (*antistrophe*) to dialectic,¹⁹⁴ Antonius at II.27.120 states that while the invention of arguments requires average intelligence, the *vis divina* of rhetoric lies in its "ornate copiose varie dicere".

This is the area of rhetoric expounded by Crassus, comprising *elocutio* and *actio* (*gestio* or *pronuntiatio*). The claims for the cultural centrality of rhetoric are not based in its method, but in its enactment of argument. Cicero's ideal of style as the flowing conveyance and reflection of thought demands that the five parts of rhetoric remain together. The finding, ordering, memorising, expression and performance of arguments are part of a single process which culminated in the delivery of a speech and the moving, teaching and persuasion of an audience. When eloquence and wisdom are detached oratory degenerates into cunning or demagogy, and philosophy divorced from civic responsibility falls into abstraction or idle speculation conducted in idleness (*otium*).

De oratore III thus opens with a criticism of the division of oratory into arguments and ornamentation which has divided two things that cannot be separated "ea divisit, quae seiuncta esse non possunt" (III.5.19). This union of matter and words is then considered in the light of the universe itself, a single whole held together by the force and harmony of nature ("omnia haec, quae supra et subter, unum esse et una vi atque consensione naturae constricta esse").¹⁹⁵ This same harmony, Crassus pursues, is revealed in the thought of Plato, who considered that

the whole of the content of the liberal and humane sciences is comprised within a single bond of union; since, as we grasp the meaning of the theory that explains the causes and issues of things, we discover a marvellous agreement and harmony underlies all branches of knowledge.¹⁹⁶

193 Treated more specifically by Cicero in *De inventione* and *Topica*.

194 *Rhetoric* I.1.1354a1.

195 "All this universe above and below us, is one single whole and is held together by a single force and harmony of Nature".

196 *De oratore* III.5.19, trans. E. Sutton and H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1942): "omnem doctrinam harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium uno quodam societatis vinculo contineri: ubi enim perspecta vis est rationis eius qua causae rerum atque excitus cognoscuntur, mirus quidam omnium quasi consensus doctrinarum concentusque reperitur".

Crassus insists that this bond should not be restricted to the theoretical sphere, but underlies the relationship between things, or arguments, and their representation. It is Socrates, most discursive of philosophers, who is charged with this division of theoretical argument and eloquence, both in his philosophy and his refusal to participate in political life, thus instigating the retreat of philosophy into the “charming gardens” (*hortulis*) of speculation divorced from public duty. The separation of thought from words is an annihilation, like the severing of the soul from the body.¹⁹⁷ The *verba* here are immediately identified with ornament as the inseparable accompaniment of the thought which it illuminates:

it is impossible to achieve the ornament of words without first procuring ideas and putting them into shape, nor can . . . any idea can possess distinction [*inlustrem*] without the light of words.¹⁹⁸

Thus the union of words and matter as body and soul is grounded in the harmonious unity of the world itself, reflected in the concord between all the branches of theoretical knowledge, and in the “societatis vinculum” at the foundation of civic order, of laws, virtues and friendship. At each level harmony implies the inseparable nature of form and content, as manifest in decorum.

To conclude, Cicero’s appeal to Stoic ethics and views of rational design creates a vision of ornament where it is decorous and tempered, providing appropriate responses to particular situations yet revealing the continuity of universal harmony. This account can move ornament away from the opprobrium of beguiling cosmetic artifice whose abuse Cicero, like Dionysius, links with sophistic rhetoric. This said, Cicero’s descriptions of ornate artifice in the rhetorical treatises also develop the view of ornament as luxury artefact with considerable skill. *De oratore* uses *ornatus* to signal what is praiseworthy in oratory, as when the greatest praise of oratory is said to be amplification by means of ornament (“Summa autem laus eloquentiae est amplificare rem ornando”, *De orat.* 111.26.104) or the power of eloquence (*illa vis . . . eloquentiae*) lies in the expression of encyclopaedic matter through copious and ornate speech

197 *De orat.* 111.6.24 “qui tanquam ab animo corpus, sic a sententiis verba seiungunt, quorum sine interitu fieri neutrum potest”.

198 “neque verborum ornamentum inveniri posse non partis expressisque sententiis neque esse ullam sententiam inlustrem sine luce verborum”. Translation adapted.

(*De orat.* III.20.76).¹⁹⁹ Such statements point to ornament's association with epideictic, the genre where amplification was most appropriate.

In *De oratore* I.16.70, rhetoric's ability to embrace any subject is shared with poetry, which it also resembles in its richness of ornament. The emphasis on ornament as the praise of rhetoric is consistent with the arguments on decorum in *De officiis* I; if rhetoric is the performance of speech, through which thought and virtue and communal bonds are realised, it must bear ornament. Cicero's discussion of the various qualities and characters of the styles, is itself conducted in highly ornate, figurative language.²⁰⁰

What Cicero gains by building this understanding of ornament is accommodation of its 'cosmic', ethical and artificial associations. This leaves a concept of ornament which however places it necessarily on the outside surface, as exterior style, with style linked to modes of ethical performance. This conception of ornament will have great force in the Renaissance, both in poetics and in visual arts, but it weakens the connection with the understanding of ornament as pattern or the framing within which things become manifest. Visual ornament continues to be deployed in this way, but the means to reflect on its role and meaning has become obscured by the ethical-rhetorical vision of ornament as the surface or *species* of style.

199 Cf. *De orat.* I.21.94 on the magnificence and wonder of eloquence which can adorn and amplify as it chooses. Compare 'Longinus' later contrast between sublimity and amplification as elevation versus quantity, illustrated by a comparison of Demosthenes' "lightening" to Cicero's "conflagration" or "flood" (*On the sublime* 12.2–5).

200 See the highly figured characterisation of the "careful negligence" of 'Attic' style in *Orator* 23.78–79 as a woman whose simple dress and uncurled hair are as studied as lavish make up.

Cosmic Decor

In this final chapter of the first section, we look at visual ornament, as object and décor. The themes chosen derive from Hellenistic conceptions of art which anticipate or parallel preoccupations of the Renaissance: the cultivation of composite arts, or arts based on other arts, within a culture of learned imitation, the way that theatre and spectacle was central to inter-art forms and the role of pseudo-naturalism in ornament.¹ The cultivation of verbal-visual allusions works across various levels and genres, from epigrams anthologised in ‘garlands’ to the taste for scenographic decoration to the use of literary illustration in the decoration of monumental interiors. The last included literary shrines, such as Ptolemy IV’s “Homereion” at Alexandria,² or the Serapeion at Memphis³ and the monumental pleasure-ship given by Hieron II of Syracuse to Ptolemy III or IV, which contained a mosaic floor illustrating the *Iliad*.

The capacity of art to imitate art also implies an engagement with illusionism, visible in the flourishing of affective and scenographic artifice. Again this appears at various levels, from the scenographic character of Hellenistic

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- 1 See Ibrahim Noshy, *The arts in Ptolemaic Egypt: a study of Greek and Egyptian influences in Ptolemaic architecture and sculpture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937).
 - 2 The Homereion, possibly used for banquets of scholars and poets, was decorated with statues personifying the cities which claimed to be Homer’s birthplace and Galaton’s painting of Homer as a god from whose mouth waters pour or vomit, collected in jugs by epigones; see Aelian, *Historia Varia* 13, 22; John Onians, *Hellenistic Art and Thought* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 134; Webster, *Hellenistic Art*, 104. Cf. Callimachus’ comparison of epic to a great flood carrying refuse contrasted with the unsullied trickling stream of a slender, scholarly oeuvre (*Hymn to Apollo*). Webster, *ibid.*, 104–14 links the Homereion with the “Apotheosis of Homer” relief (British Museum) and the “Homeric bowls”, clay cups found chiefly in Boeotia but thought to derive from earlier Alexandrian silver cups, illustrating scenes from Homer and the tragedians, with captions and quotations. Other artefacts illustrating Homer are the *Tabulae Iliacae* (Capitoline Museums), marble reliefs showing scenes from epic cycles (principally Homeric) with captions and quotations.
 - 3 The Serapeion contained an exedra with statues of poets and thinkers or scholars from Orpheus to Demetrius of Phaleron; the immortality promised to initiates of Serapis blends with the immortality of literary fame. See Webster, *Hellenistic Art*, 35–6. In Callimachus’ *First Iambos*, set in the Serapeion at Alexandria, Hipponax, the biting sixth century iambist, returns from Hades to effect reconciliation between the quarrelling scholar poets of Alexandria by means of a sermon preached before the living scholar poets and their companions, the dead poets commemorated by statues.

architecture and urbanism, in such sites as Lindos, Priene and Pergamon to the psychological detail and literary landscape painting in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. The artist celebrated for his mastery of optical effects was Lysippos, who replaced the system of proportion ("Canon") devised by Polykleitos with a versatile art which Pliny said showed men as they appeared, not as they were.⁴ This was achieved through manipulation of proportion, attention to minute detail, use of torsion and "subtle fluctuation of surface".⁵ Theatrical effect, optical illusion, emotional affect, apparent liveliness and varied representation are seen as characteristically Hellenistic qualities; they also exhibit the illusionist character Plato associated with fantastic mimesis and with sophistic artifice.⁶

In theatre itself, the raising of the stage above the orchestra in Hellenistic theatres, as at Epidauros, Euboia, Akrai or Thasos, distanced actors from the chorus, restricted in New Comedy to interludes. Like the introduction of the cothurnus (first used in Pergamon), the elevation of the stage turned theatre into a spectacle experienced in terms of visual distance. The patterning of disclosure between actor and chorus, whose dance and song carried cosmic symbolism, gives way to the scenographic isolation of the stage as an object of artifice. The cosmic reciprocities carried by actor and chorus in pre-Hellenistic drama change to visual or optical reciprocities between beholder and the thing seen. If the cosmic character of drama gives way to scenography, scenography can also be deployed to dramatise movement, action and experience. Thus scenographic principles were used in architectural complexes, such as the Temple of Asclepius on Kos or the Acropolis at Lindos, where colonnades and terracing dramatise movement through a site.⁷

The high status enjoyed by illusion, variety, theatricality and liveliness in Renaissance art should remind us of the strength of a non-Platonic, ultimately sophistic aesthetic in the period. We have traced the precedents in ancient

4 NH XXXIV.65. The affective quality was more striking in Lysippos' most famous work, his affective portraits of Alexander, which Plutarch said captured the king's virtue and character. The longing upwards gaze in the Alexander portrait appears earlier in the works of Scopas, such as his *Pothos* (Desire); see Bieber, *Sculpture*, 25–26.

5 On Lysippos' use of torsion and its affective impact, see Pliny, NH XXXVI.61 ff; Bieber, *Sculpture*, 31–2; Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 48. The torsion could also take the form of spiralling *contrapposto* of figures like the female Dancers (Rome, Museo Nazionale and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), or the Dancing Satyr of Villa Borghese, see Bieber, *Sculpture*, 39.

6 Bieber, *Sculpture*, 3, discusses Richard Laqueur's claim in *Hellenismus* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1925), that the Hellenistic world owed its origins to the sophistic movement.

7 For further discussion of Hellenistic axial planning and scenographic placement of monuments, see Onians, *Hellenistic Art*.

rhetoric in Chapter 2. In this chapter we shall see how this aesthetic arose in ancient visual art and how it strengthened in Early Christian art, with its emphasis on wonder and artifice deployed to create awe beyond reason.

Ornamental Spectacles

We have spoken at length about ornaments of speech described as though they were artefacts. The links between epideictic, artefacts and ceremony appear in Cicero in *Brutus* 16.62, who notes that funeral orations were kept by families as *ornamenta* or *monumenta*, which made the family glory illustrious and were kept for other funerals. Cicero also compares oratory and the award of triumphs as alternative sources of glory.⁸ Encomium, epideictic, triumph and *adventus* were alike occasions of praise.⁹ Here we consider how objects functioned epideictically, in spectacles of praise such as triumph.¹⁰ Mixing celebrations of kingship, religious rite and victory parade, the triumph is thus a key ceremony for ornament in traditional Western culture, and central to the ‘return’ of antiquity in the Renaissance—we shall thus return to it repeatedly. At the outset, we should reflect that the triumph is not only a victory pageant but a mode of seeing.

Prior to the Roman triumph, ornament plays an important role in victory celebrations of Greek games and in ceremonies where themes of cosmic rule or empire were performed, which have been traced back to the ancient Near East.¹¹ Victory involves investiture with ornaments that signal a kingly or quasi-divine status, and decoration of places with objects which serve as memorials. Ornament as commemoration of victory often assumes the form of an enduring rendering of an ephemeral object (garland, trophy, laurel).¹² The rhetoric of victory is given literary form in the *Odes* of Pindar, with their exalted language

8 *Brutus* 73.255–57.

9 On the topics of praise and amplification in encomium, see the treatises of Menander Rhetor; praise of cities is discussed in *Division of Epideictic Speeches* 11.344–366.

10 Isidore *Etymologiae* 18.2.2, “De triumphis”, glossed *pompa* as “publice ostentari”.

11 See H.P. L’Orange, *Studies on the iconography of cosmic kingship in the ancient world* (Oslo: H. Aschehou, 1953), 44–50, on Ancient Near Eastern representations of kings in cosmic chariot and of the throne-chariot; *ibid.*, 87, on the bearing of the king by his supporters as the raising of a new sun.

12 Diodorus Siculus XIII.24.5 notes the old Greek custom of erecting trophies in wood so that the memorials of enmity would vanish quickly. For sources, see *Brill’s New Pauly* XIV, cols. 963–964. On garlands, see J.B. Trapp, “The Owl’s Ivy and the Poet’s Bays: An Enquiry into Poetic Garlands”, *JWCI*, 21 (1958), 227–55, esp. n. 24 for bibliography.

portraying the flashing light and speed of the victor's chariot. Pindar's *Odes* show victory in the *agon* as a light whose splendour illuminates sacred myths, genealogies and the histories of places; the outcome of the contest reveals a larger order rehearsed in the narrative of the poem. The chariot also denotes the active force of virtue as movement, thus providing an explicit representation of *energeia*. The splendour of divinity and the light of praise are inter-worked or muddled—a confusion which will reappear frequently.

The chariot signifies the god-like character of victory and rule, with the dominant qualities of the soul enthroned and governing, providing a type for depictions of virtues in triumphs or pageants of the vices.¹³ The chariot shows how ornament can work at a series of levels; it carries 'cosmic' imagery in its association with light and with the (planetary) gods, it can appear as aureole or splendour, showing the activity and qualities of the soul and it forms a seat or throne for a figure.¹⁴ It can figure as emanation and as locus and in this sense exemplifies the muddling of context and effulgence which we shall see exploited in Early Christian and Byzantine art.¹⁵ The chariot as an image of movement shows the passage to or from conditions of human life: the descent into generation (notably in the Platonic tradition), or instrument of

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- 13 The chariot as the seat of vice appears in commentaries on Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites (Exodus 15:1–4), especially Origen's *Homilies on Exodus* and St Bernard's *Sermones in Cantica* xxxix (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2000). For the influence of Bernard's commentaries on the chariots of *Malitia*, *Luxuria* and *Avaritia* in English Renaissance literature and spectacle, see Samuel C. Chew, "The Allegorical Chariot in English literature of the Renaissance" in *De artibus opuscula XL. Essays in honour of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), I, 37–54.
 - 14 The archbishop's chair in Ravenna bore the inscription AUT LUX, HIC NATA EST, AUT CAPTA, HIC LIBERA EST. Quoted in Giovanna Parravicini and Irina Šalina *Icona: Immagine di fede e arte* (Turin: San Paolo, 2006), 37.
 - 15 The chariot offered a meeting of imperial-Christian iconography, given the ascent of Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) and Ezekiel's vision of the chariot of God (Ezekiel 1:4–1:28). The tradition of Jewish chariot commentary (*merkabah*) on the passage must remain beyond this discussion. For Philo's use of chariot images, see Runia, *Philo*, 214–15. Elijah's apotheosis appears in late third and late fourth century sarcophagi, in the Vatican, Milan and Paris, some of which depict the apotheosis before a city gate, as though it were an imperial departure (*profectio*); see Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 124–25. The triumphal car of the church where Beatrice appears to Dante in *Purgatorio* 29 is likened to the chariot of Elijah, outshining the Roman chariots of Scipio and Augustus, and of the sun itself, before its subsequent metamorphosis into its evil antitype, the beast which carries the scarlet woman of Revelation 17:4–5.

apotheosis.¹⁶ In this way it is related to the *clipeus* (often garlanded) and mandorla as forms which signal super-natural presence—of divine theophany, of the dead commemorated or of the authority of an absent ruler.¹⁷ These decorative frames imply the super-natural character of the adorned figure and the special conditions of appearance; specifically, the disclosure of the universal or divine in human events. In the Arch of Constantine or the Antonine altar at Ephesus, the chariot as vehicle of imperial presence or apotheosis bears cosmic iconography.¹⁸ Such depictions were related to rhetorical celebrations of the ruler as a planet, star or cosmic harbinger of health and plenty.¹⁹

- 16 For the chariot in Platonic philosophy as the vehicle of the soul, see *Phaedrus* and the Neoplatonic *ochēma*, the subtle vehicle of the soul by which it descends to embodiment. L'Orange, *Iconography of cosmic kingship*, 64, remarks on the victorious charioteer motifs in Roman sepulchral art as an image for the immortality of the soul.
- 17 See the crane relief in Tomb of the Haterii (Vatican Museum) where the busts of three children appear in two garlanded and one shell-niche. The elaborate mausoleum is covered in reliefs of garland-bearing putti, pilasters with vegetal relief, peopled scrolls, column with vine scrolls and eagles. On the *clipeus*, used to signify the dead or the authority of the absent or invisible, see André Grabar, *L'Art de la Fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age* (Paris, Collège de France, 1968), 1, "The Virgin in a mandorla of light" (1955), 535–41 and "Imago Clipeata" (1957), 607–13; H.P. L'Orange, "Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World", *Likeness and Icon: Selected Studies in Classical and Early Medieval Art* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1973), 313–24; *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* VI (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2005), s.v. "Mandorla" cols 1–17; Patrik Reuterswärd, "Windows of Divine Light", in *The Visible and Invisible in Art* (Vienna: Irsa, 1991), 45–56. Grabar, "Imago", 607–8, notes the triumphal significance of the *imago clipeata*, with its corona shape and the winged figures who bear it on sarcophagi, which he sees as descendants of Nikē figures; the *imago clipeata* appears in galleries of famous men from the fourth century CE.
- 18 The Antonine altar shows Trajan ascending the chariot of Sol, with Tellus beneath and Plotina with Vesperus ascending the chariot of Night, with Ocean beneath. The sides of the Arch of Constantine have medallions of the *quadriga* of Sol rising from the Ocean and Luna in her *biga* setting into it; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 35–37, suggests these signify the *adventus* and *profectio* (departure) of the emperor, which thus becomes a cosmic event.
- 19 MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 23, relates celebrations of emperors as stars or planets to Hellenistic *adventus* rhetoric, like the Athenians' celebration of Demetrius Poliorcetes as a *deus praesens* or the celebration of Caesar in the East as *theos epiphanies*. For Augustus' exploitation of the comet that 'showed' Caesar's apotheosis, the *sidus Iulium*, see Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 34–36, 44–65, on Roman political claimants' self-presentation as a god following the death of Caesar, especially Octavian's identification with Apollo. Statius, *Silvae* IV.1 3–4 celebrates Domitian as rising with the sun and shining more brightly than the morning star. See *Panegyrici Latini* ed. and trans. Édouard Galletier (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1949), 1, 4.3, where Constantius is compared to a "divine star". Discussed in



FIGURE 3.1 *Sol in a quadriga ascending from ocean. Rome, Arch of Constantine, east side, 315 CE.*

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

This rhetoric develops in the Hellenistic period, in Alexander's deification and his self-identification with Dionysus and influences the self-presentation of late Republican generals such as Pompey and Caesar.²⁰ It grows again in the imperial period, when military triumphs were restricted to the imperial family, and becomes dominant in the monuments and panegyrics of the Tetrarchs in the late third century, and with Constantine's cultivation of solar iconography.²¹

MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 172; cf. 45–50, on the acclamation of Julian by panegyrists and Ammianus Marcellinus as health-giving star, *salutare sidus*.

- 20 The divinity of the victor becomes a political policy with Alexander who in 324 requested the Greek cities of the League of Corinth to recognise him as a god; see J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 271–73. Pollitt judges Alexander's request as political manoeuvre, in order to intervene in the affairs of other member cities without coercion. On Alexander's Indian campaign as a 'Dionysian' re-enactment, see Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.28; Plutarch, *Alexander* 67; for Pompey's self-presentation as Alexander and Dionysus, see Plutarch, *Pompey*.
- 21 On the restriction of the triumph to the imperial family by Augustus, see Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA-London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 69–71. On the triumph from the imperial to the Carolingian period, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium and the early medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). A statue of Constantine with his head haloed by rays, like *Sol invictus* topped the porphyry column ("Burnt Column"), in the centre of the circular forum, Constantinople. See MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 35–36, on the Ticinum medallion (313) which shows Sol crowned with rays beside Constantine wreathed in laurel, carrying a shield that shows the quadriga of Sol rising from Ocean; the obverse shows Constantine in the posture of *adventus*, led by Victory. MacCormack quotes a panegyric of 310 which describes Constantine's identity with Sol-Apollo.

Menander Rhetor's treatise on epideictic contains such topics for imperial oration, including the emperor as apparently human but sent from heaven, as rivalling the fairest star in the sky as he emerges from the womb, on his justice as the cause of rain in season, abundance from the sea and plentiful harvest.²² MacCormack suggests that monuments like the Arch of Galerius at Thessaloniki, where Maximian and Diocletian appear enthroned over Earth and Sky, Tellus and Coelus, presented a "theory of the ultimately divine nature of imperial power . . . which left the human person of the emperor intact".²³ Such conflation could permit the confluence of cosmic themes and epideictic which would make triumph so suggestive as theme and mode in the Renaissance.

If triumph was related to the solar iconography of kingship and apotheosis, it was also a Dionysian display, which represented the abundance of nature and its regeneration to proclaim the universality of a ruler or victor.²⁴ This apparently starts with Alexander, becomes a staple of Hellenistic political spectacle and is adapted in Rome—notably by Pompey who advertised his resemblance to Alexander. The Dionysian side of triumphal ornament also works with notions of temporality, in the sense of return.²⁵ Versnel links the supposedly Dionysian origins of *thriambos* to Dionysus as a god of seasonal epiphany, who returns as he is reawakened or rediscovered by humans, to re-enter the city in noisy procession.²⁶

22 Menander Rhetor, *Menander*, 370.25–26, 371.15–17, 377.22–24.

23 MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 33; cf. 57–61. The panegyrist of 297 linked the four emperors of the Tetrarchy to the seasons, elements, four parts of the earth, lights of the sky and the horses of the quadriga of Sol; see *Panegyrici Latini*, I, 4.4. See Zanker, *Power of Images*, 167–77, 188–92, on the representation of Apollo, Diana and abundant earth in the cuirassed statue of Augustus from the Villa of Livia, Prima Porta and in Horace's *Carmen saeculare*; cf. the Neronian Jupiter Column at Mainz and the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, begun under Tiberius and completed under Nero.

24 For attempts to clarify the relation between Roman military triumph and triumph as Dionysian festival, see H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus: an Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

25 On the complementarity of Dionysian, manifold transformation and Apollonian splendour, see the discussion of David Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 106–23, esp. 108 on Plutarch, *Moralia* 388f.

26 Versnel, *Triumphus*, 21–23, 35–38. Hesychius defines *thriambos* as "Dionysiakos hymnos" giving another meaning as a procession (*pompē*) or victory display (*epideixis nikēs*). Varro, *De lingua Latina* vi.68 claimed that *triumphe* or *triumpe* derived from Greek *thriambos*, which he called an epithet of Dionysus, "Graeco Liberi cognomento"; Servius, *In Aen.* x.775 defines *thriambeuin* as *exultatio*. On the relation of *thriambos* to other Greek nouns terminating in *-ambos* associated with Dionysus, namely iambos and dithyramb,

Dionysus' dual link with seasonal regeneration and with the luxury or artifice of theatre appears in the Symposium tent and Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, c. 276 BCE.²⁷ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* V, 196a–202b, recounts a description by Callixeinos of the sumptuous tent and procession, in which the super-natural springtime ornament which 'flourishes' at the coming of the god works together with a sophistic interest in the description of artworks which counterfeit and outdo nature. The spectacle tent was filled with statues, paintings of the Sikyonian school, portraits, embroidered clothes, gold and silver shields, figures representing characters from drama, gold cups, Delphic tripods, couches, precious vessels and Persian rugs. Although the procession took place in winter, the tent was scattered with spring flowers like a meadow.²⁸

The procession contained temporal allegories (the Morning and Evening Stars, "Cyclic Year" (*Eniautos*) bearing a cornucopia, *Pentetēris* ("Five year-span"), the *Hōrai* and contained two cars dedicated to Dionysus, first as wine god and then returning in triumph from India, plus two cars dedicated to Alexander (Alexander with Ptolemy, Alexander with Athena and *Nikē*).²⁹ Dionysus as a god of natural regeneration appears alongside Alexander, rendered immortal through his exploits.³⁰ Dramatic motifs combined with vegetal

see Versnel, *Triumphus*, 12–55. Versnel argues that *thriambe* was a ritual exclamation, like others linked to Dionysus: "cries by which the god was called to epiphany" (37), which correspond to the puzzling *triumpe*, uttered five times at the end of the *carmen arvale*, after the invocation to Mars to show himself.

27 On the descriptions of luxury artefacts and festivals in *Deipnosophists* V, see Ruth Webb, "Picturing the Past: the uses of *ekphrasis* in *Deipnosophistae* V and other works of the Second Sophistic", in Braund and Wilkins eds., *Athenaeus*, 218–26; Ellen E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). Rice discusses the Ptolemaic association with Dionysus as shaped through Alexander (*ibid.*, 84–5).

28 Rice, *ibid.*, 32 discusses the use of bower-like surroundings for Dionysian feasts.

29 The procession also featured Dionysian followers (Silenoi, satyrs, maenads with streaming hair, daggers and snakes, *thiasoi*, priests and priestesses). Amongst other cars were those dedicated to Nyssa, to satyrs trampling grapes, to wine vessels, a cave of the nymphs and a show of exotic animals in the 'Indian' car. Pliny NH XXXV.93 recounts that Alexander had Apelles portray him as Zeus with the Dioscuri and *Nikē* (in the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus), and in a triumphal chariot with Polemos (War) bound. The paintings were later exhibited in the Forum of Augustus, where Pliny described them as showing Alexander as a progenitor of Roman imperial triumph. Claudius had the face repainted as a portrait of Augustus.

30 The Ptolemaic procession also featured the unusual scene of Dionysus at the altar of Rhea; see Rice, *Grand Procession*, 99–101, on sources for Dionysus with Rhea-Cybele, such as *Bacchae* 58ff, 78ff; pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.5.1.

ornament: the first car with Dionysus had a canopy decorated with ivy, vines and other fruits, to which were attached wreaths, ribbons, *thyrsoi*, tambourines, fillets and theatre masks. The description suggests the degree to which the repertoire of Hellenistic and subsequently Roman ornamental motifs had Dionysian associations. It also shows the conflation of cosmic allegory, victory pageant and the kind of sumptuous décor associated with sophistic rhetoric as theme and analogy.

As military display, the Roman triumph concerns displacement and return to a place, where the tension between the autochthonous, the uprooted and the universality of Rome is stressed. The power of objects to carry emblematic significance is important, as is the semantic flexibility of objects, and the converse theme of empty theatricality. What the two views of triumph share is the identification of Rome as universal city through her triumphs, whether as pageants of nature gods (Cybele, Dionysus) or as destination for the whole world's riches, the mother city of trophies (*mētropolis tōn trōpaiōn*), as Themistius proclaimed.³¹ In *Aeneid* VI. 781–787, Anchises' prophecy of Rome's greatness likens the triumph of Cybele, the *magna mater*, to Rome crowned by its walls as mother city of world empire:

... illa incluta Roma
Imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,
Septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces,
Felix prole virum: qualis Berecynthia mater
Invehitur curru Phrygias turrita per urbes,
Laeta deum partu, centum complexa nepotes,
Omnis caelicolas, omnis super alta tenentis.³²

31 *Oration* 3, 42b, cited in MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 34.

32 "Glorious Rome shall bound her empire by earth, her pride by heaven, and with a single city's wall shall enclose her seven hills, blest in her brood of men: even as the Berecynthian mother, turret-crowned, rides in her car through the Phrygian cities, glad in her offspring of gods, and clasping a hundred of her children's children, all denizens of heaven, all dwellers in the heights above". Translation adapted from H.R. Fairclough, ed. Loeb (London: Heinemann, 1916). For a less sympathetic version of the procession of the Great Mother, see Lucretius, *De rerum natura* II.618–39. Cf. *Georgic* II.173 on Italy as "Magna parens frugum, Saturnia Tellus", noted by Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 141ff., where he also discusses the relevance of the "Berecynthian Mother" for the 'Tellus' relief of the *Ara Pacis*.

The passage is quoted in Renaissance triumphs and may influence the popularity of the *magna mater* in Renaissance decorations.³³

The Dionysian character of the triumph can also be a way to signal its empty role-playing, exemplified by Plutarch's accounts of the theatrical flamboyance of Hellenistic kings such as Demetrius Poliorcetes.³⁴ Such Hellenistic rulers became victims of their own theatricality, as when the stage machine lowering a Nikē figure to crown Mithridates VI Eupator in the theatre at Pergamon malfunctioned, shattering the statue and dropping the crown into the dust of the theatre floor.³⁵ In *Aratus* 15 Plutarch has Antigonus Gonatas recount how Aratus became suspicious of the theatricality of Egypt, seeing its wealth as nothing but dramatic performance and scenography. Athenaeus' account of the Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy II is preceded by another triumphal pageant, that of Antiochus Epiphanes in Antioch (167 BCE), who however was regarded as insane. Like the Alexandrian pageant, this procession contained temporal allegories and robed statues of the gods, plus mythological scenes.³⁶ Far from a triumph, the procession was a performance to cover military defeat by the Romans in response to Antiochus' invasion of Egypt.

Pompey, another emulator of Alexander, brought to Rome luxury goods and constructed grandiose theatre buildings linked with his contact with the Hellenistic world.³⁷ Pompey's theatre complex encompassed a temple to Venus Victrix, colonnades for the display of trophies and spoils, forum and theatre; its opening performance featured musical and athletic *agones* plus games

33 See Chapter 8.

34 Plutarch, *Demetrius* 41, relates that amongst Demetrius' robes was a robe embroidered with images of the cosmos and celestial bodies, which remained unfinished at his change in fortune and was never completed or worn by his successors. Plutarch compares Demetrius with Anthony's degeneration under the influence of Ptolemaic opulence.

35 Plutarch, *Sulla* 11.

36 On Antiochus' procession, see Athenaeus 194c–196a; Polybius xxx.25.13–16.

37 See Plutarch, *Pompey*, 2.1–2; 46.1; Pliny, *NH* vii.26.95 ff. on Pompey and his comparison with Alexander, Hercules and Liber; *NH* xxxvii.6.12 ff. for his introduction of luxuries, like Gnaeus Manlius and Lucius Scipio after their triumphs. Pliny sees the giant portrait head, made from pearls, which Pompey displayed in his triumph over Mithridates as prefiguring Pompey's execution in Egypt. Pompey's first attempt at Dionysian glory in his African triumph came to an undignified end as he attempted to make an entry using elephants, which stuck in the city gate and had to be abandoned. Plutarch recounts that before Pharsalia, Pompey dreamt of applause in his theatre (*Pompey* 68.2); see *ibid.* 42.4 on the theatre at Mytilene as Pompey's source.

with beasts.³⁸ The theatre was a spectacular complex which turned a section of Rome into a triumphal topography.³⁹

Plutarch's accounts of the vicissitudes of kings and generals who exploited the spectacle of power suggest both the role of Fortune or *tychē* and the topos of life as a theatre where we perform the roles thrown to us by Fortune.⁴⁰ The implications of this theatre topos are distinct from the Stoic and Platonic allusions to the vision of the world or the heavens as objects of contemplation which reveal the good design of providence and are developed in hexaemeral literature.⁴¹ The topos of life as a stage is a Cynical and Stoical theme designed to encourage virtue and acceptance of fate or to underline the random, anti-providential character of the world and the illusory nature of worldly success.⁴² Certain accounts of Roman triumph locate theatrical mimicry within the triumph itself; Appian includes in the procession an actor dressed like the *imperator* in purple and gold, who caused laughter by dancing as though trampling on the enemy.⁴³

If epideictic illustrates praise, the triumph takes this further in the way that the triumphant figure personified or imitated a god.⁴⁴ Ancient accounts

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- 38 On the universality of Pompey's triumphs, see Plutarch, *Pompey* 38; 45.5. On Pompey's theatre and its range of spectacle spaces, see Mark Temelini, "Pompey's Politics and the Presentation of his Theatre-Temple Complex, 61–52 BCE", *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia* 7 A.4 (2006); <http://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/>, retrieved 6 June 2012.
- 39 Pliny, *NH* VII.3.34 recounts that Pompey had images of celebrated marvels as the decorations of the theatre. Cf. *NH* XXXIV.36, XXXVI.24.113–15, XXXVI.64.189, on the theatre of Scaurus which created the illusion of a palatial universe like that of Hellenistic kings.
- 40 See Plutarch, *Demetrius*; cf. Plutarch, *Political advice* 813f where he warns Menemachus that politicians should be like actors in their performance. Plutarch uses triumph to signal the turning of fortune; Paullus Aemilius is laid low by the death of his sons after his glorious triumph (*Paullus Aemilius* 34).
- 41 Runia in Philo, *On the creation*, 251, notes that the "all the world's a stage" topos is not to be identified with the use of theatre as an image for contemplation of creation. Plotinus uses the extended theatre of life metaphor in *Enneads* III.2.11 and III.2.15–18 in contemplation of the unequal lots and unforeseeable circumstances of human fortune.
- 42 See Epictetus *Discourses* IV.104–9; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* VII.160 on Ariston; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 13.20; 64.22; Aelian *Varia Historia* II.11, where the topos is attributed to Socrates. The topos appears frequently in Lucian, in *Menippus* or *Necyomantia* 16; *Gallus* 26; *Rhetorum praeceptor* 12; *Piscator* 31; *Icaromenippus* 17, 29; *Apologia* 5.
- 43 Appian, *Romica* VIII.9.66. Other comic elements included the bawdy Fescennine songs sung by the army (Plutarch, *Paullus Aemilius* 34).
- 44 Versnel, *Triumphus*, 74, discusses the *ornatus triumphalis* as a copy of the *ornatus Iovis* (Livy X.7.10), also called *tunica Iovis* in Juvenal, *Satires* 10.38; *exuviae Iovis* in Suetonius,

suggest that the spectacular character of the pageant, which can exhibit the god-like character of the seated, gorgeously robed triumphal figure, can also render him indistinguishable from the personifications which surround him, so that he appears like a statue of himself.⁴⁵ A striking description of this kind is Ammianus Marcellinus' account of the *adventus* of Constantius II to Rome in 357, where the emperor sat in his golden car whose gems formed a second daylight while the dragons embroidered on his banners seemed to writhe and hiss as they fluttered around him. Constantius sat like the "graven image of a man" and his armoured infantrymen were like "statues polished by the hand of Praxiteles".⁴⁶ The distinction between living and lifeless things disappears in the aura of marvellous artifice which surrounds the quasi-divine emperor, around whom a second daylight shines from wrought jewels. Ammianus however criticises the scene as a contrived display. In *Rhetoric* 111.11.1–3, 141b, Aristotle said that metaphor brings lifeless things to life and transforms men into images, making animate things lifeless. Artifice can make men appear less, as well as more, than human.

Triumph thus allows objects to stand for people (like the effigy of Cleopatra carried in the triumph of Augustus), to be affecting personifications (images or *tychē* of cities or territories) or objects which affect spectators as though they were animated. In the triumph of Paullus Aemilius, enemy arms were arranged as though carelessly loaded, so that they rattled unsettlingly as they passed the spectators, filling them with apprehension.⁴⁷ The triumph also becomes a locus for certain kinds of allegory, such as topographic personifications.⁴⁸ Such spectacular allegory appears in the poetry of Claudian, where the universal

Aug. 94; *Iovis insignia* in Servius, *Ad Verg. Ecl.* 10.27. Anti-emperors in late antiquity had themselves clothed at their proclamations with the robes of a statue of a god, see Versnel, *Triumphus*, 73, n. 3. Interpretation of triumphal costume is overviewed in Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 225–33.

45 Plutarch, *Marcellus* 8, describes Marcellus as seeming like a statue (*agalma*) in his triumphal chariot. Claudian, *De IV consulatu Honorii Augusti*, ll. 571–72, compares Honorius' *adventus* in Rome (392) to the image of a god leaving his shrine; see MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 54.

46 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XVI.10.6–8, 10. Hissing dragons and soldiers like living statues appear also in Claudian's panegyric on the sixth consulship of Honorius, ll. 564–74.

47 Plutarch, *Paullus Aemilius* 32–34.

48 See Tacitus, *Annals* 11.42 on the triumph of Germanicus over the tribes west of the Elbe, where "simulachra montium, fluminum, proeliorum" were displayed; Ovid, *Amores* 1.2 with its pageant of allegorical personifications; Quintilian VI.3.61 on Caesar's display of "eborea oppida" in his African triumph compared to Fabius Maximus, who displayed "lignea oppida" and was ridiculed for avarice. Silus Italicus' *Punica* (ll. 625–54), on the

geography of empire is transformed into a series of discourses performed by grandiose topographic personifications in a kind of lofty masque.

So the triumph not only shows 'praise' but creates conditions for the figurative display of things, so that they carry meanings. Livy notes that the display of spoils confirmed the reality of a victory.⁴⁹ This display of objects as signs is inherent in discussions of the Roman origins of the trophy created and dedicated by Romulus; the trophy is both commemoration and sign, to use Panofsky's terms.⁵⁰ In Livy, Romulus's dedication of his rugged trophy marks the consecration of the Capitol and this origin is contrasted with the subsequent degeneration of the ceremony, which weakens Roman identity with its introduction of exotic goods and customs.⁵¹ Livy claims the tree grew at the foot of the Capitol, so Romulus' dedication of the trophy is also the foundation of the Capitol as the sacred core of Rome: "haec templi est origo quod primum omnium Romae sacratum est".⁵² The identification of Rome with

triumph of Scipio, turns such topographic display into a *tableau vivant* filled with descriptions of faces—of captured cities and of the crowd staring at representations of the war.

- 49 Livy 45.39 says that to bring treasure back to Rome without display would be like a thief returning in the night. The image inverts the depredations suffered by the defeated to the Roman people robbed of their glory without the triumph. Polybius XVI.23 on Scipio's triumph says that the actuality (*energeia*) of the spectacle reminded the people of the danger of former peril.
- 50 Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, 16. On the Roman origins of the trophy, see Plutarch *Romulus* 16 for Romulus' dedication of the trophy mounted on the branch of a "monstrous oak" and dedicated on the Capitol. Plutarch describes the trophy torn off a tree by the battlefield and carried back to Rome.
- 51 See Livy 39.6 on Gnaeus Manlius Volso, whose booty corrupted rustic sobriety and native vigour with the introduction of gourmet food, luxury goods and fancy furniture. The pernicious effect of wealth is bemoaned by Pliny, NH XXXIII.53.148ff who dates the vogue for statues and pictures to the triumph over Corinth, the use of silver in statues and gold in ceilings after the fall of Carthage.
- 52 Livy I.10. The 'Etruscan' elements mentioned by Florus, Appian and Plutarch play a more complex role; they are native and oriental, indicative of luxury and called *Lydi* in reference to the supposed eastern origins of the Etruscans. See Appian, *Romica* VIII.9.66 on harpists and pipers wearing belts and golden wreaths; Florus, *Epitome* I.5 includes embroidered robe and the *tunica palamata*; Pliny, NH XXXIII.19.63 on Tarquinius as wearing clothes woven with gold thread, the precious "Attalic" cloth; *ibid.*, XXXIV.16.33 on the arraying of the statue of Hercules dedicated by Evander with triumphal vestments. Plutarch, *Romulus* 16.8 states that Tarquin son of Demartus raised triumphs to pomp and ceremony; see *Marcellus* 8 on Numa Pomphilus' discussion of the *spolia opima* in his commentaries.

trophies persisted after the abandonment of the pagan ceremony of dedication to Capitoline Jupiter at the culmination of the triumph.⁵³

The trophy refers to an action and place, but its meanings arise through displacement and absence (empty arms); its signifying character is founded on a dislocation from its original meaning. The arms shift from being instruments to being symbols, or—through rededication—attributes. Thus Livy insists that in placing the empty arms on the autochthonous oak branch, Romulus gives ritual origins to native Roman tradition. As spoils, trophies become meaningful through redeployment, as well as through dislocation; they exhibit the degree to which the significance of objects is contextual, amenable to reconfiguration with each new display. Cicero says that Marcellus “rendered all things profane” after his victory in Syracuse, but this Sicilian booty became once again sacred due to the time elapsed and the peace between Rome and Syracuse.⁵⁴

Triumphal objects resemble ornaments of speech in their redeployment from a proper meaning to a new, figurative significance. When Pliny and Livy complain about the luxury promoted by triumphs they also address the shift from simple things used symbolically (the oak branch trophy or *coronae* made of grass or leaves) to materially precious objects which can be inserted anywhere. Widespread material luxury thus undermines the symbolic potential of objects. Cicero in *Verrine Orations* 11.4. 23.51–24.54 describes silver ornaments (*emblemata*) from Haluntium stripped away from their owners in a scene of spoliation and attached by Verres to golden cups and basins.

In ancient accounts of triumph the role of place in establishing the meaning of artefacts emerges strongly. The tension between the magnificent spoils of world empire and the hallowed, primeval place to which they are brought is central to its meaning. Where spoliation is decried, as in Cicero's *Verrine Orations*, the plunder of objects hallowed in a sacred, civic or ancestral setting turns them into signs of greed and luxuriousness.⁵⁵

53 See MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 34, on Constantine's refusal or hesitation to make the triumphal sacrifice on the Capitol in 312 or 321. The sacrifice was not made by any succeeding emperor.

54 *Verrine Orations* 11.4.122; see Vasaly, *Representations*, 107.

55 *Verrine Orations* 1.5.14, 11.1.17.46–11.1.23.61, 11.2.87, 11.2.63.154. Verres' plunder is described in detail at 11.4, where Cicero feigns ignorance about Greek art and details the thefts. The *Orations* conclude with a prayer to the gods whose images Verres robbed, culminating with Ceres and Proserpina, patrons of the land of Sicily. Vasaly, *Representations*, 127, discusses the combination of *topographia* and *enargeia* in the orations.

Triumph to Topical Articulation

An important account of re-contextualisation of spoils comes in Plutarch's description of the triumph of Marcellus for his conquest of Syracuse (*Marcellus* 21).⁵⁶ Plutarch says that Marcellus used looted artworks in the spectacle of his triumph and for the adornment (*kosmos*) for the city. This gained him popular acclaim but condemnation from older men for leading gods as well as men as captives to the city and for weakening the martial simplicity of Rome with luxury, idleness (*scholē*) and clever chatter talk about art.⁵⁷ The artworks brought from Syracuse possess pleasure (*hēdonē*), charm (*charis*) and fidelity, they reflect the love for grace and subtlety (*glaphyron*) and the knowledge of elegant and exquisite works. Plutarch contrasts this aesthetic delight with Rome, filled with barbaric arms, as a discomfoting sight for unwarlike or luxurious spectators (*theatōn*), "the precinct of much warring Ares".

This is an interesting passage because it sets up such a strong contrast between *ornatus*, the equipment or gear which as trophy is dedicated to a god or victor, and ornament as the *decor*—or *décor*—which creates a setting for refined activities. We have seen terms such as *charis* and *glaphyron* are used by Demetrius to describe the elegant style, associated with lyric poetry and refined or graceful subjects, or settings, notably gardens. The gods to whom trophies were dedicated are turned by Marcellus into ornaments themselves.

Plutarch suggests that the earlier use of ornament belongs to a rude age, an impression confirmed by his account of the rugged origins of the trophy, in the "monstrous branch" hewn by Romulus to display captured arms. Marcellus himself is part of this tradition, as he, like Romulus, dedicates *spolia opima*, trophies taken from defeating the enemy commander in single combat and dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius.⁵⁸ Marcellus displays statues not only as memorials of a victory but as objects of aesthetic reflection which articulate a context. The *scholē* associated with the arrival of the artworks and condemned by old Romans for idle chatter about art is the leisure stated by Aristotle as

56 See Cicero's account of Marcellus' removal of statues from Syracuse, which left the city and its ornament largely intact, *Verrine Orations* 11.4.54.120–55.121.

57 In contrast, Fabius Maximus left the statues (*agalmata*) of Tarentum in their places, dryly suggesting that the angry gods were best left with the Tarantines. Plutarch cites Euripides' description of Hercules as "plain, unadorned (*akompon*), in great crisis good" to illustrate Rome prior to Marcellus' adornment, but Marcellus boasted to the Greeks that he was the first to make their beautiful and wonderful things honoured and marvelled at by the Romans.

58 Plutarch states that only three commanders dedicated *spolia opima*—Romulus, Cornelius Cossus, Marcellus (*Romulus* 16.7).

the precondition of intellectual work in the history of philosophy which opens *Metaphysics* 1.⁵⁹

The tension between dedication of spoils as memorials in a state religion of war and their use in forming a context for cultural activities suggests edifices like Pompey's theatre and Domitian's Templum Pacis as complexes which combined the role of victory temple and museum shaping an urban topography.⁶⁰ The statues brought by Marcellus to Rome have their later counterparts in the villas where Cicero's academic works are staged, where their presence is carefully scripted. Social ordering involves both the establishment of a code of law, the primary act of organised religion and politics, and the consolidation of the background of action as a civic topography. Marc Fumaroli recognises this when he remarks "*L'Orator* renaît en meme temps que l'*Urbs*; il se détache sur un paysage urbain et politique".⁶¹

The *mise en scène* of Cicero's own works shows a careful elaboration of the setting from implicit background into a carefully constructed commemorative scene which serves to monumentalise the action that takes place within it. The continuity between setting and action shows how each forms the other, with the associative, commemorative qualities of the setting as locus influencing the action. A rhetoric based on the topics, like that delineated by Aristotle, with its series of ethical types and arguments to be drawn from them, helps to shape this associative conception of place, aside from the spatial metaphor of the topic or locus as a 'seat' of argument.⁶² The topos as a place which holds association can be treated as one of the *argumenta ab re*, concerning the

59 *Metaphysics* 1.3.

60 On the Templum Pacis see Diana Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 181, 187.

61 Fumaroli, *L'Âge de l'éloquence*, 44.

62 Cicero identifies the topic or *locus* as the "seat" of an argument ("*Itaque licet definire locum esse argumenti sedem*", *Topica*, 11.7), and he divides the topics into two—those inherent to the nature of an argument, drawn from circumstances, and those external to the argument, which depend on testimony and have the force of authority, such as divine oracles; compare with Aristotle's division between 'artificial' and 'inartificial' proofs in *Rhetoric* 1.2.2, 1355b. Amongst topics drawn from circumstances, arguments from cause and effect are especially important, and give *copia* of arguments to philosophers and poets (as well as to orators) respectively—Cicero speaks of the Stoics as having "woven" doctrines of fate from infinite series of causes (xiv.58, xviii.67). At xviii.71 Cicero gives a full list of the *sedes argumentorum*: definition, partition, etymology, conjugation, genus, species, similarity, difference, contraries, adjuncts, consequents, antecedents, contradictions, causes, effects, comparison. For a later, schematic application of topics to place, see the account of encomia of cities in Menander Rhetor.

motive, place, time, means, and instrument of an action. Praise and blame can be derived from the place itself, and the types of individual one finds in certain places—*ethos* thus seems derived from, or defined by *topos*.⁶³

Cicero's treatment of associative place suggests how arguments may be held in places as though they 'arise' from them, and he makes significant references, like markers or stage directions, throughout the dialogues and academic works—the second part of the *Academica* takes place in the xystus of Hortensius's villa, *De amicitia* takes place in a garden, *De natura deorum* in the exedra of Cotta's house, and in *Brutus* the speakers sit down on the grass beside a statue of Plato to discuss the history of oratory, as though the *entopioi theoi* of *Phaedrus* had been concretised into the form of monuments to historic exemplars.⁶⁴ In *De oratore*, the dramatised discussion of oratory starts as Scaevola spots a plane tree in the gardens of Crassus's villa which reminds him of *Phaedrus*, and suggests that everyone sit and talk beneath it, since the setting in Plato's dialogue could inspire divine eloquence even in the "rough footed Socrates".⁶⁵ The qualities of recollection which the place inspires, already so important in *Phaedrus*, become the basis for explicit imitation. The setting does not merely exist in continuity with the central action, but can represent things which shape the action within it through their associations. If the garden setting of *De oratore* is the stage for a Roman imitation of *Phaedrus*, argued from the side of oratory, its imitative qualities have a commemorative character conspicuous in the elegiac presentation of Crassus himself.⁶⁶

This memorial quality appears in *De finibus*, which contains a discussion of how place inspires memory—to be in a place where famous men lived or worked moves us more than reading of them or their deeds and for this reason place is the basis of the art of memory.⁶⁷ The loci of *De finibus* v.2 are objects of historical reflection. This moving quality can be encapsulated in certain objects, and so re-evoked by them; a plane tree which chances to provoke recollection of *Phaedrus* and a herm of Plato work in the same way. The more

63 Vasaly, *Representations*, 131–55.

64 Cicero's naming of the gymnasia of his Tusculan villa the Academy and Lyceum gives further examples of the role of place in cultural translation. In discussion of artworks to decorate the gymnasium, Cicero says that "the place itself informs me of what it needs", "me locus ipse admoneret" (*Ad Atticum* 1.10.3).

65 *Ibid.*, 1.7.28. The charms of the plane tree are further spoilt as Crassus and his guests sit on chairs and cushions brought by slaves.

66 *De orat.* 111.3.9–4.16. Crassus is portrayed rapt in contemplation like Socrates before he gives his discourse on *elocutio* (*ibid.* 111.4.15–16, 111.5.17).

67 *De finibus* v.1, "tanta vis admonitionis in locis, ut non sine causa ex iis memoriae ducta sit disciplina".

we regard place as meaningful because of what happens there, the more the physical remains will take on metonymic or symbolic significance. The real locus itself—the Academy in Athens, to take the example in *De finibus*, will always have a deeper impact than its imitations, even if its aspect is altered or decayed profoundly.⁶⁸ Imitation of the locus by contrast makes it an element of the conspicuous configuration of decorum.

De legibus opens with a description of the ancient oak at Arpinum, said to live for ever, since it has been planted by a poet's verses (actually Cicero's)—leading again to invocation of *Phaedrus*. This invocation of Arpinum, which mythicises the landscape via inter-textual allusion in order to immortalise it, is balanced in a second invocation in the opening chapters of Book II. Here Arpinum is described as the birthplace of Cicero, provoking reflection on the sanctity of the place where one was born and ancestral rites took place. Arpinum is the *sacra privata*, the first fatherland of Cicero and his parent by nature, while Rome is a *sacra publica*, a fatherland through citizenship, by law or adoption, although it is this greater fatherland and common citizenship which demands duty, service and obedience.⁶⁹

From the idealised ancestral locus we draw identity and feel the full sense of *communitas*. It forms the ground for the sense of virtue and continuity that provides the *constantia* for the whole of life, so the character and its dispositions are in the deepest harmony with the setting. The setting of decorum provides the scene for an enactment which attempts to evoke or emulate past events in virtue and distinction, whilst insisting on its own particularity, and its situation in the universal order of measure, harmony and justice.

The way that Cicero remarks on the presence of a statue at moments of his dialogues suggests they play a topical or tropic role, turning narrative themes and disclosing a mode of reading. These decorative details which show a place as a habitat can be said to form the *topical articulation* of the scene. The allusions to artefacts which punctuate Cicero's dialogues thus turn or direct but do not determine a certain kind of activity and remain half in the background, allowing a dialogic openness exemplified in the conversational 'foreground' activity. They are exemplary markers like the masks and garlands in Graeco-roman painting which carry Dionysian allusions to theatre, symposium and pastoral scene. In Cicero's theoretical and academic works, even a tree could act as a topical exemplar, like the plane tree of *De oratore* or the oak of Arpinum in *De legibus*. These might be compared to the framing trees in late Hellenistic or Augustan reliefs; in each case the tree frames a narrative and is

68 Ibid., v.1–2.

69 *De legibus* II.1.1–II.3.6.

also a kind of actor within the scene. Cicero's use of *umbracula* and *umbratilis* to denote certain kinds of speech and activity—the otium of poets and philosophers—suggests the degree to which speech and place are linked.⁷⁰ The linking of poetic speech with overhanging trees, already evident in *Phaedrus*, becomes a topos in Theocritus and is linked with ornament in Cicero's warnings about poetry promoting “vitamque umbratilem et delicatam” in *Tusculan Disputations* 11.11.27.⁷¹ In such topical articulation, a decorative element which forms a background or frame can be foregrounded at certain points, when it serves to turn or illuminate a certain point.⁷² It thus has the fluidity to move between a given context and a tropical function. We might also recall that Stoic celebrations of *ornatus mundi* included habitat as well as species.

This kind of topical articulation however can function only in a dialogic context, like that implied by the leisure and aesthetic “chatter” created by Marcellus' decorative deployment of his triumphal booty. It requires an appropriate activity for the relationship between action and object to become actualised, as the Phaedran plane tree in Crassus' villa provokes discussion of oratory. Such articulation is distinct from the deployment of ornament in ceremonial or sacred situations where the activities are formalised and ritualistic.

We suggested that the landscape details which appear in Hellenistic relief sculpture show something comparable to the topical articulation provided by trees, statues and buildings in Cicero's dialogues. Such details create a scenic context for the activity of figures.⁷³ We might consider whether these landscape topoi show a movement from the enclosing, framing character of the ornamental motif to an apparently naturalistic setting. The tree is both within

70 See Chapter 2, n. 162.

71 On the topos of poetry beneath trees, see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 187; he discusses the ideal landscape as *argumentum ab loco*, logical topic and poetic topos, at *ibid.*, 193–94.

72 This kind of articulation appears also in Augustine's *De ordine*, with its villa setting and its theme of universal order and its manifestations. Here the setting provides examples of disorder which punctuate the dialogue; rustling mice and dripping water which disturb the speakers from sleep.

73 The section of the Telephos frieze from the Pergamon Altar of Zeus (Berlin), showing Neaira, Aelos and Hercules, and the votive relief thought to be from Rhodes (Glyptothek, Munich), where a family bring sacrifice to two gods and an altar beneath a draped plane tree, are thought to be the earliest examples of relief scenes where landscape frames the figures. See Bieber, *Sculpture* 126–27, who suggests a date of c. 160 BCE for the Munich votive relief and notes the controversies over the Roman or Hellenistic origin of these reliefs with landscape elements; the latter first postulated by Theodor Schreiber, who coined the term “Hellenistic relief”.

and without the scene, functioning as a topographic and often sacred feature but also carries an ornamental role as enclosing vegetal motif; the trees in Hellenistic reliefs frequently overhang the scene. The dual role is particularly clear in the first century “Blue Vase”, a glass amphora with cameo decoration from Pompeii (Museo Archeologico, Naples), where the scrolling ornament of rosettes and vines at the front and back transform at the sides into trees framing *erotes* at play.

The so-called Icarius reliefs, showing the visit of Dionysus and his *thiasos* (festive band) to a poet show a whole series of ornamental and scenographic elements: framing trees, foreshortened buildings decorated with garlands, walls, columns and festooned drapery, votive tablet with a victor driving a



FIGURE 3.2 *Blue Vase from Villa of the Mosaic Columns, Pompeii, first century CE. Naples, chromolithograph by J.R. Robbins in Apsley Pellatt, Curiosities of Glass Making: With Details of the Processes and Productions of Ancient and Modern Ornamental Glass Manufacture (London, 1849).*
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chariot, pediment with gorgon and tritons, wreaths and masks.⁷⁴ A version of the relief found in Kephisia that shows a less extended scene, focused on the figures and central architectural strata, replaces the trees with a prominent acanthus frieze.⁷⁵

The versions of the Icarius relief suggest the similar role played by framing vegetal motifs and the scenic, decorative elements, but the latter affect the narrative as the former does not. As argued, the ornamental character of these features has an allusive, metaphoric nature; they work as *topoi* which can turn and direct narrative themes.⁷⁶ Sometimes these scenic ornaments can become the central theme, as in the relief panel dated to the late first century BCE in Munich (Glyptothek). It shows a peasant driving a cow past a rural sanctuary whose circular wall has partly collapsed, revealing a curved pedestal surmounted by a basket of fruit. A torch leans against the pedestal, and two tambourines balance on the sanctuary walls. To the right an old tree grows from the entrance arch to the sanctuary; to the upper left a shrine with a herm to Pan sits on a rock. The theatrical character lies in the Dionysian-satyrical allusions of the sacred-rustic scene, in the quasi-perspectival character of the high and bas relief to denote distance and in the ornamental details, such as the elaborate cornice of the sanctuary. Another element however enters which appears in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and will reappear in Renaissance antiquarianism: the aged, ruinous character of the monument forms part of its decorative character, as well as conveying themes of political renovation.⁷⁷ The gnarled branch does not just show the movement of ornament from framing motif to scenographic *topos*; it also allusion to time. Here the habitat as *orna-*

74 This describes the London version of the relief (British Museum); other copies are in the Louvre and Naples, where the recession of the building is accentuated. Zanker, *Power of Images*, 62–4, associates the relief with Anthony's identification with Dionysus; he also reads the hedonistic passages in Propertius, e.g. 2.15.39–47, as evidence of nostalgia for Anthony-Dionysus.

75 For an Early Christian version, see the sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum, where the arches separating scenes (as in the Junius Bassus sarcophagus) are replaced by intertwined trees; see Josef Wilpert, *I sarcophagi cristiani antichi* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1929–36).

76 See Zanker, *Power of Images*, 115–17, on political usages of the association of architecture and ritual in Augustan art—and the corresponding use of sacrificial motifs in architectural ornament; *ibid.*, 285–87, on the “sacral-idyllic” landscapes whose rustic idyll is portrayed through accumulated luxurious architectural elements.

77 See *ibid.*, 289–90, on the didactic character of the relief, drawing an analogy with the *deserta sacra* of Propertius 111.13.47, renovated in the *saeculum aureum* of Augustus.



FIGURE 3.3 *'Icarius' relief, Graeco-Roman copy after Hellenistic original, first century BCE.*

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tus becomes the locus for historical reflection; we are not shown nature to be improved by art, but a vision of art which alludes to decay and the question of renovation.

Garlands

The scenographic, illusionistic and inter-art possibilities of ornament can work together, as in the success of the garland as motif in Hellenistic and Roman art, which marks limits, shows exuberant naturalism (or pseudo-naturalism) and carries poetic allusions alongside its connotations of victory and praise.⁷⁸ In Pliny's account, the garland was first worn only by gods, then by those sacrificing and sacrificed to gods, then in sacred contests and games

78 On the varieties of victory wreath, see Pliny, *NH* XVI.5, XXII.4, XXII.7 and XXI.6 on penalties for improper use of garlands; Josef Köchling, *De coronarum apud antiquos vi et usu* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1914), 69–75.

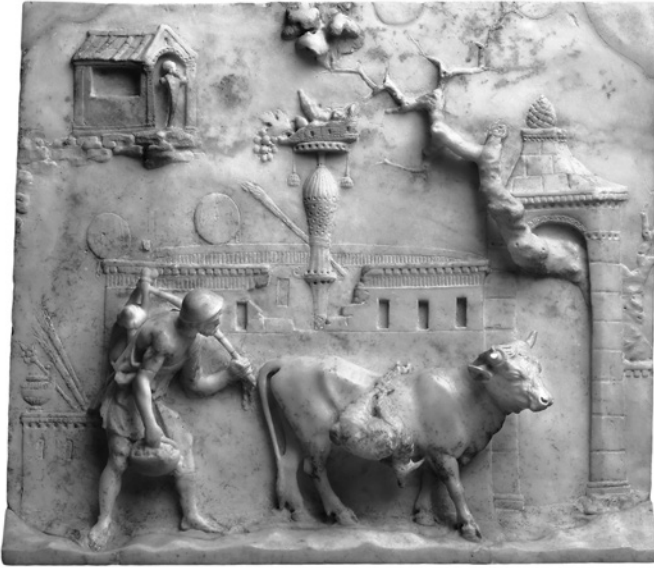


FIGURE 3.4 *Graeco-roman relief, late first century BCE. Munich, Glyptothek.*
 PHOTO: STAATLICHE ANTIKENSAMMLUNGEN UND
 GLYPOTHEK, MÜNCHEN/CHRISTA KOPPERMANN.

(NH XVI.3–4).⁷⁹ Pliny notes that the garland honours tombs and the *manes* as well as public and private *lares*; the *corona* awarded in the games was to be displayed at the funeral and burial of victors or their parents (NH XXI.5, XXI.8). Finally, the garland or garlanding can be extended from people to places; Pliny speaks of the forum adorned with the rostra of ships as a state *corona* (XVI.3), like the *corona rostratae* or *navalis*.⁸⁰

The poetic allusions of the garland appear in the festive, generic or epigrammatic associations, and in its mask-bearing character, with its Dionysian connotations.⁸¹ The garland with masks certainly appears in contexts with Dionysian associations, such as theatres and their surroundings (Pergamon, theatre; Athens, altar in the precinct of Dionysus) or dining rooms (House of the Faun, Pompeii; House of the Masks, Delos) but spreads beyond them in

79 See *ibid.*, 33–34, on the living wood of the garlanding branch (or the liveliness of its artistic representation) as denoting the presence of the god in the adorned place.

80 Köchling, *ibid.*, 48–61, discusses the ritual uses of the garland (and other binding devices, such as threads) as an encircling device of temples, statues and altars.

81 Pliny names Liber, i.e. Dionysus as the first to set a wreath on his head, appropriate given his legendary role as inventor of the triumph (NH XVI.4).



FIGURE 3.5 *Fresco with Dionysian mask and garlands from Boscoreale, 50–40 BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1903.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

Campanian painting, appearing in illusionistic images of gardens or as the decorative element in wall painting.⁸² As with trees in relief panels, the naturalistically rendered garland or tendril can frame the scene depicted. In the Krater of Salpion (Naples, Museo Archeologico) which shows Hermes carrying the infant Dionysus to the nymphs of Nysa, the vine tendril at the top of the vase forms a type of pergola over the figures, suggesting the locus for the nursing of Dionysus. Late Hellenistic Neo-attic art develops the dramatic-festive character of ‘naturalistic’ ornament to the point that certain kinds of figurative

82 On the popularity of Dionysian themes and motifs in the early principate, exemplified by the centrality of Liber to Augustan poetry, see Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 87–123, esp. 111ff. on the blending of Apollonian and Dionysian allusions in sacral or rustic scenes, following on such texts as Propertius 11.1.8 where the Castalian cave is hung with Dionysian instruments. On the ritual use and organisation of Roman Houses, see P. von Blanckenhagen, “Paintings from Boscotrecase”, *Metropolitan Museum Bulletin* (Winter 1987–88); Clarke, *Houses of Roman Italy*, 66–67, relates the “Tapestry Manner” of the Fourth Style to the description of the pavilion erected by Ptolemy Philadelphus for his Dionysiac Procession.

representation become ornamental motifs, such as the maenad figures which become a running pattern in reliefs, bases and craters.⁸³ Festival, ceremony and theatre are the medium through which visual-verbal associations are created. Literary-visual play is fundamental to the development of pseudo-naturalism in ornamental motifs.



FIGURE 3.6 *Marble calyx-krater with relief of dancing Maenads, first century CE. New York, Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 1903. PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.*

83 Bieber, *Sculpture*, 182–3, likens the use of human figures, notably maenads, as ornamental motifs on late Hellenistic decorative reliefs to “movable type which a printer can use for different words and in most diverse ways”. On maenad figures, see Pollitt, *Art in the*

Riegl noted the naturalistic tendency exemplified by the emergence of acanthus decoration in the fifth century, which he read as a version of the palmette motif, given relief and perspective.⁸⁴ This tendency to naturalism and pictorial projection in rendering of ornament was central to Riegl's argument that ornamental motifs develop from stylisation towards apparent verism.⁸⁵ In the Hellenistic period, these naturalistic and perspectival qualities become evident in acanthus floral decoration on Apulian painted vases and have been associated with the Siconyian painter Pausias, who excelled in images of flowers and garlands.⁸⁶ For Riegl, the handling of tendril ornament in Hellenistic and Roman decoration marked the beginning of a new phase in the conception of ornament, which he associated with the decorative role of

Hellenistic Age, 170. For maenads as a running motif, see the Neo-Attic base, first century BCE (Museo Nazionale alle Terme, Rome); the amphora by Sosibios (Louvre); a Neo-Attic relief (Uffizi, ca 100 BCE); a rhyton by Pontios, late first century BCE, (Capitoline Museums).

- 84 See Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 187–207, especially 199, fig. 116, on the use of perspective in the acanthus calyx ornament on the Erechtheion; *ibid.*, 213 for a summary of Riegl's argument on the acanthus as "a perspectival type of palmette". Roar Hauglid, "The Greek Acanthus: Problems of Origin", *Acta archaeologica* 18 (1947), 93–116, summarises the reception of Riegl's argument, which provoked Morton Meurer's research for a naturalistic origin of acanthus ornament. Hauglid sees acanthus as a development from palmette acroteria and its prototype in the Aeolic capital with its wreath of leaves, double volute and palmette.
- 85 See Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 191ff, for the evolution of acanthus from palmette to resemble the *acanthus spinosa*; *ibid.*, 362, on Riegl's influence. Subsequent evidence has shown the tendril appears in Minoan, Cretan and Syrian artefacts; see *ibid.*, 333–36. Hauglid, "Greek Acanthus", 112–16, suggests that the appearance of acanthus in burial objects (see Vitruvius' fable of the origins of the Corinthian capital) may arise from the garlanding of stelae or in the association of thorny or spiky plants with Hades and in their prophylactic use.
- 86 See Pliny, NH XXXV.40.123–27. On Pausias and floral ornament, see Martin Robertson, "Greek Mosaics", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 85 (1965), 72–89 and 87 (1967), 133–36; *idem*, *History of Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 486–88. On floral ornament in perspective see Michael Pfrommer, "Grossgriechischer und mittelitalischer Einfluss in der Rankornamentik frühhellenistischer Zeit", *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts* 97 (1982), 119–90. The spiralling tendrils in Apulian vases often frame a female bust rising from a calyx, one example in the British Museum inscribed "Aura". J.M.C. Toynbee and J.B. Ward-Perkins, "Peopled Scrolls: A Hellenistic Motif in Imperial Art", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18, 1950, 5, note the funerary context of Apulian amphorae. For Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 59–60, Apulian vase ornament shows the goddess' "life-engendering power". Pergamon was an important centre for naturalistic vegetal ornament; see Castriota, *ibid.*, 14ff; T. Kraus, *Die Ranken der Ara Pacis: ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der augusteischen Ornamentik* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1953).

sculpture and painting in Hellenistic architecture, and the space-filling role of tendril ornament.⁸⁷ Riegl saw it as “the task of Hellenistic artists to find an appropriate means of combining human figures and tendril ornament”.⁸⁸ This kind of space-filling tendril ornament, where foreshortened blossoms flower from traditional abstract motifs, and creatures populate the foliage, is a precursor for the grotesque decoration which will occupy us later.⁸⁹ The pseudo-naturalism appears in motifs such as acanthus, and in the populating of tendril ornament with creatures and figures, notably winged *erotes*.⁹⁰ The lightness and delicacy of the *erotes* which inhabit tendril ornament alongside birds and other fugitive creatures, like the cicada which appears in the peopled scroll of a pilaster from the Hadrianic baths in Aphrodisias might also be associated with the *topoi* of the lyric poet as a cicada or bee.⁹¹ The ‘medallions’ created by the double acanthus scroll can also act as vignettes which frame figures within miniature loci; a marble stele from Pergamon (Berlin) shows two satyrs who

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- 87 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 208–9. Ward-Perkins and Toynbee, “Peopled Scrolls”, provide a typology and study their development from the Hellenistic period to late antiquity; they list the principal eras for peopled scroll ornament in the Roman empire as Domitian’s building programme “which established the acanthus-scroll with intertwined beasts or with animal protomai securely within the repertory of metropolitan Roman architectural monument”, in the restoration of Domitian’s palace in the Severan period and under Aurelian, and in the work by builders from Aphrodisias on the Severan buildings at Lepcis Magna (*ibid.*, 42). On the revived ‘classicism’ of Trajan’s forum in contrast to opulent Flavian ornament, revived under the Severans, see Maria Bertoldi, *Ricerche sulla decorazione architettonica del Foro Traiano* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1962).
- 88 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 210, also 184–6, 355–56, for pre-Hellenistic cases of inclusion of animal figures in tendril ornament. The gilt silver amphora from Nikopol-Chertomlyk (Hermitage, late fifth century or fourth century BCE) is seen as the earliest extant example of populated tendril ornament; see *ibid.*, 209–10; Hauglid, “Greek Acanthus”, 109–10. Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 60, notes that “the oldest extant example of female figures . . . whose lower extremities portions metamorphose into tendrils appear on Italiote Greek vase painting of the late fourth century BC”.
- 89 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 224, notes that the intermittent tendril was occasionally interspersed with dolphins or cornucopiae.
- 90 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 186, discusses a fifth century Attic vase where a flying figure of Eros appears amongst the tendril motifs; see Ward-Perkins and Toynbee, “Peopled Scrolls”, 3–8, for Hellenistic examples, which also feature Dionysus and the “Great Goddess”.
- 91 Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 43, notes that the insects, amphibians, birds and reptiles (“therio-trophic floral ornament”) on the decorative friezes do not come from the same repertoire as the ‘polycarpophoric’ vegetal ornament (i.e. Pergamene reliefs) but from mosaic, silverware and ceramics of Asia minor. See *ibid.*, 51–55, on whether such creatures may have referred to Dionysus or Tellus. On the pilaster from the Hadrianic baths in Aphrodisias (Archaeological Museum, Istanbul), see Ward-Perkins and Toynbee, “Peopled Scrolls”, 34.



FIGURE 3.7 *Relief pilaster with peopled scroll from Hadrianic Baths at Aprosias, second century CE. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum.*
COURTESY ISTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.
PHOTO: AUTHOR.



FIGURE 3.8 *Cicada in acanthus*, detail of fig. 7.

gaze at maenad sleeping upon a calyx, and lift her gauzy skirts; they crouch within the acanthus scroll, and clutch at overhanging vines.⁹²

Riegl suggested that with the peopled scroll decoration becomes a field, rather than framing something other than itself.⁹³ With the appearance of figures in ornamental motifs, the motifs become a support for dramatic fantasies, a realm of artifice in which imaginary creatures play. Virgil calls the acanthus *flexus* (*Georgics* IV. 123) and its malleable quality is associated in Latin poetry with refined artistry.⁹⁴ Castriota proposes that peopled scrolls should be

92 Ward-Perkins and Toynbee, "Peopled Scrolls", 8. A similar scene reappears in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. The placing of figures within vertical scrolls comes to mature representation in the pilaster of the Haterii monument (Lateran Museum).

93 Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 186.

94 Other acanthus references include Virgil, *Ecl.* III.45 on the beechwood cup carved with "mollī . . . acantho", recalling Theocritus 1.55–56 where the acanthus growing around a goblet is a "marvel" which amazes the spirit; *Ecl.* IV.20 comm. Servius; *Aen.* I.649, on the veil

termed “theonomous, since it is the authority or power of the accompanying gods that they truly symbolise and celebrate”—the tendril thus acts as a vehicle or displays the field of the god or paraclete’s power.⁹⁵ The peopled scroll, with its mixture of fantasy and naturalistic or pseudo-naturalistic vegetal ornament can be regarded as a counterpart to the scenic tendencies which can blur the distinction between ‘naturalistic’ vegetal motifs and landscape elements that frame a scene.⁹⁶ What happens within the field bounded by garlands is consciously theatrical and artificial.

We have suggested that the ‘naturalism’ here is scenic and theatrical, rather than ‘realist’ in character.⁹⁷ The increasing naturalism in the handling of abstract vegetal motifs, which will culminate in the superb fleshy carving of the acanthus ‘plants’ in the Ara Pacis, should not however be seen as a movement towards verism, but towards artifice. The subsequent development of the peopled scroll, as discussed by Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, is towards increasingly dense, lace-like patterning of Severan relief which turns the whole surface into a mass of decorative detail.⁹⁸ This kind of ornament was revived in the early engraved *grotesche* of Nicoletto da Modena, Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, Zoan Andrea or Marcantonio Raimondi.⁹⁹

In Hellenistic and Roman rhetoric and literary criticism, in its theatrical and fantastic decorative forms, ornament has moved a long way from the ‘pre-metaphysical’ role of pattern in figuring the contraries from which order is manifest. The relations which it depicts become the analogies and interplay

embroidered with acanthus motifs, “circumtextum croceo velamen acantho”; Columella x.241 on the artichoke which ‘imitates’ the acanthus leaf, “tortos . . . acanthos”; Propertius III.9.14 on the work of silver-chaser Myos, “Myos exiguum flectit acanthus iter”; Statius, *Silvae* III.1.37–38 on the couch embroidered with purple acanthus, “Sidonio celsum pulvinar acantho/ texitur”. For later developments of these references, see Chapter 12.

95 Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 61.

96 See Clarke, *Houses of Roman Italy*, 14–17, on the axial organisation of Roman houses and its effect on the choice of decorative modes; *ibid.*, 19–23, on the importance of framed views of nature in the villa.

97 See *ibid.*, 45–9, on relation of Second Style decoration to theatrical scene painting; *ibid.*, 57, on the term *pictor imaginarius* which appears in the 301 *Edict of Diocletian on Maximum Prices*—Clarke suggests it refers to the artists who painted the scenes in aedicule or medallions within decorative schemes.

98 Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, “Peopled Scrolls”, and Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 228, argue that the tendril frieze becomes progressively less naturalistic, more formalised and abstract in Roman imperial art; Riegl, *ibid.*, 234, regards the arabesque as a development of the acanthus scroll. On early-mid Imperial architectural ornament, see Vittorio Spinazzola, *Le arti decorative in Pompei e nel Museo Nazionale di Pompei* (Rome: Bestetti e Tumminelli, 1928).

99 Ward-Perkins and Toynbee, “Peopled Scrolls”, 20–21, pl. 18.



FIGURE 3.9

Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, Detail of a candelabra grotesque, with Nereid and children playing musical instruments, 1490–1515. New York, Metropolitan Museum, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1923.

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

between artistic modes and the potentialities of artifice in a culture where naturalism or pseudo-naturalism is fundamental to the profoundly theatrical character of artifice. We see a kind of artifice where naturalism of method—in the proto-perspectival depiction of vegetal forms, for example—contrasts with the overtly artificial character of the things depicted. The fictive forms derived from acanthus motifs, which are sculpted in the Roman period as though depicting the swellings and tendrils of an actual plant, illustrate the kind of artifice which affects us through its combination of liveliness and emphatically imaginary character. Aristotle's description of *energeia* as the property of metaphor, giving life to lifeless things, is central to this conception of ornament, as shown in the repeated rhetorical injunctions to deploy "lively ornament". As Aristotle's comments suggest, such liveliness concerns artificiality and fantasy; what ornament illuminates concerns the conditions of artificial representation.

Super-Naturalism

H.P. L'Orange suggested that the abundance of the earth prophesied in Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* 18ff. describes the luxuriant growth of nature in terms similar to the magnificent floral frieze of the Ara Pacis: ivy and acanthus will mix with exotic flowers (*baccar*, *colocasia*, *amomum*), grapes will shoot from wild plants.¹⁰⁰ The multi-coloured sheep and disappearance of nature's unpleasant creations in the Eclogue are matched by the fabulous opulence of the floral ornament of the Ara Pacis, which is fantastic yet provides a compelling representation of natural growth.¹⁰¹

L'Orange here provides an important key to understanding vegetal ornament: pseudo or super-naturalism and artificial elaboration can be used to show the divinely granted abundance of good government. *Ornatus mundi* is shown artificial and transmuted in the presence of divinity or divinised kingship. L'Orange's argument also recalls the Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy II where the plethora of ornament, including plants blossoming out of season, marked the 'epiphany' of a god in a political parade.¹⁰²

The overt artifice is not *l'art pour l'art*; it moves beyond nature while following modes of organisation or development based in nature. This looks superficially like Semper's view that ornament presented an analogy to nature's laws of growth and progression, but the artificial growth which emulates and outshines nature is 'produced' by the exceptional virtue or divinely inspired

100 H.P. L'Orange, "Ara Pacis Augustae. La zona floreale" (1962), repr. in *Likeness and Icon*, 263–77, esp. 269–71. L'Orange notes the associations of Pax with Nature's plenty in Tibullus 1.10.45–50; Horace, *Carmen saeculare* 57–60; Ovid, *Fasti* 1.704 and in Augustan coins depicting a wheat sheaf. See *ibid.*, 272–3 on panegyrics to Constantine and Maximian which describe abundant plant life in the *felicitas* of the imperial reign, again with topoi derived from the *Fourth Eclogue*. L'Orange compares the division between figurative sculpture above and 'natural' motifs below with the arches of Septimius Severus and Constantine which show the emperor in the upper zone, with physical allegories (river gods and seasonal genius figures) below (*ibid.*, 273). On L'Orange's argument, see Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 5–12, 124. On disputes over the Pergamene or Neoaetian character of the Ara Pacis, see Riegl, *Problems of Style*, 370.

101 L'Orange, "Ara Pacis Augustae", 266, 271, says the whole real life of plants is present in supernatural fertility and abundance, noting the plants which flower from bare rock in the Tellus relief of the Ara Pacis. He reads vegetal ornament as a metonymic allusion to nature gods and their petitioning for "the cyclical renewal of earthly bounty".

102 Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 139, similarly sees Virgilian celebrations of the golden age as pertinent to the Ara Pacis, but regards the celebration of Bacchic abundance in the *Second Georgic* as the analogue, rather than the miraculous fecundity of the *Fourth Eclogue*.



FIGURE 3.10
Ara pacis, Rome, detail of acanthus
 frieze. Engraving designed by
 Agostino Veneziano, c. 1530–1535.
 PHOTO: RICK HALL.
 BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART,
 THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
 AT AUSTIN, ARCHER M.
 HUNTINGTON MUSEUM FUND,
 BY EXCHANGE, 1999 (1999.43).

excellence which it celebrates.¹⁰³ At the same time, the allusions to real plants inserted within foliate scrolls, and the rhythmic form of the scrolls themselves, carry allusion to cyclical regeneration and renovation.¹⁰⁴ The advent of the divine or nature touched by the divine makes the earth blossom spontaneously; L'Orange shows the re-use of the Ara Pacis acanthus scrolls in the mosaics of the Lateran Baptistery (fifth century) and San Clemente.¹⁰⁵ In San

103 In Semper's criteria of symmetry, proportionality, direction and fitness of purpose (see introduction to "Theorie des Formell-Schönen", in Hermann, *Gottfried Semper*, 241), the last suggests an ultimately Aristotelian notion of fitness to an end.

104 See Castriota, *Ara Pacis*, 164, on the use of recognisable plants and fruits in Pergamene decoration.

105 L'Orange, "Ara Pacis", 274, compares *Iliad* xiv.346ff., where Mount Ida blossoms as Zeus embraces Hera; *De rerum natura* 1.1.7–8 on the earth blooming for Venus; *Fourth Eclogue* 23 on the flowers blossoming at the cradle of the child. In the Ara Pacis, the laurels and swans identify Augustus with Apollo; L'Orange quotes Horace, *Odes* iv.5.5 on Augustus as

Clemente, the cross grows from the great scrolling acanthus, peopled with creatures and historical figures; in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, such scrolls appear to each side of an alabaster window, a symbol of divine light.¹⁰⁶ Ornament in its super-naturalism becomes indeed “added light”. The *ornatus mundi* is shown artificial and transmuted in the presence of divinity or divinised rule. In Early Christian art, the celebration of Creator through creation comes together with the appropriation or spoliation of earlier culture by the church triumphant, evident in Eusebius’ designation of Christian sites as trophies,¹⁰⁷ in the ascribed derivation of the mandorla from the *clipeus* of imperial and funerary art and in the term ‘triumphal arch’ to designate the wall flanking the apse behind the high altar in the *Liber pontificalis*.¹⁰⁸

a light bringer (ibid., 272). He notes that the swans are replaced by jewelled crosses in the apse mosaic of the Lateran Baptistery (ibid., 275).

106 See Reuterswärd, “Windows of Divine Light”.

107 In Colossians 2:15 Christian redemption is heralded as a triumph. See McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 100–111, on the ‘Christianisation’ of victory celebrations. For Christian sites as trophies, see Eusebius, *Church History* 11.25.7, x.4.20; idem, *Life of Constantine* 1.28 on the cross in which Constantine will triumph as a “trophy”; ibid., 111.50.1, 111.54.1–2, 111.54.4–7 on churches as monuments of victory while Constantine ‘humiliates’ pagan religious artefacts, with statues stripped of metals and “led captive”. The Constantinian inscription of the apse of St Peter’s, recorded in the fifteenth century in the collection of inscriptions at the Monastery of Einsiedeln read “Because with you as leader, the world triumphant arose to the stars/victorious Constantine dedicated this hall to you” (QUOD DUCE TE MUNDUS SURREXIT IN ASTRA TRIUMPHANS/HANC CONSTANTINUS VICTOR TIBI CONDIDIT AULAM). Köchling, *De coronarum*, 94, notes allusions to the crown of life (*stephanos tēs zōēs*) in Revelations 2:10 and James 1:12; see Tertullian, *De corona*, on martyrdom for refusal to wear a laurel crown as a triumph; Prudentius, *Liber peristephanon* on the ‘triumphs’ of martyrdom. Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, 46, notes the inscription *N.N. triumpha* on Early Christian tombs in the belief that their souls were received at the gates of Heaven like kings and emperors before city gates. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 132, notes an association of victory with the cult of the Virgin from the sixth and seventh centuries in Byzantium and the repeated use of Hagia Sophia and other churches in victory processions. On Early Christianity and antique art, see inter alia Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150–750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971); Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*; Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*.

108 Krautheimer, “The Early Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture”, *Art Bulletin* 24 (1942), 34, notes four appearances of the inscription *arcus triumphalis* on North African arches of the third or fourth century and the inscription *arcu[s] triumph[is] insig[is]* on the Arch of Constantine; earlier terms for honorary arches are *fornix* and—from the age of Augustus—*arcus*. Chiara Frugoni, “L’antichità: dai *Mirabilia* alla propaganda politica” in *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana* ed. Salvatore Settis (Torino: Einaudi, 1986), 1, 20,

As imperial art promulgates the divinity of the emperor, the super-natural and artificial role of ornament becomes more prominent, in artworks and their literary descriptions. The poetic panegyrics of Claudian describe imperial arrivals (*adventus*) as triumphs in ornate verse filled with images of cosmic order and rule celebrated in a sequence of invocations and prophecies uttered by solemn allegorical personifications.¹⁰⁹ Claudian's descriptions of lavish textiles whose embroideries figure myths or histories serve in part as a metaphor for the poet's own craft, in weaving skilfully images and actions in the gold and purple of poetic ornament.¹¹⁰ Early Christianity adapted or appropriated such style, shifting the rhetoric of divinisation from persons onto regalia and decoration.¹¹¹ Thus Corippus exclaims on the light which outshines nature created by Byzantine imperial accoutrements, edifices and persons.¹¹²

n. 63, discusses the use of *arcus triumphalis* in the *Liber pontificalis* in the time of Paschal I (817–24); Antonio Pinelli “Feste e trionfi: continuità e metamorfosi di un tema”, in *Memoria dell'antico* 11, 285, cites J. Ciampinus, *Vetera monimenta* (Rome, 1690), I, 199–200, on Christians decorating the triumphal arch of the church as pagans decorated triumphal arches. See also Mario D'Onofrio, *Roma e Aquisgrana* (Rome: Edizioni Rari Nantes, 1983), 61. For a survey of Roman triumphal arches, see W. Kähler, “Triumphus”, Pauly-Wissowa, *RE* 7A1 (1939), 373–493; F. Noack, “Triumph und Triumphbogen”, *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* (1925–26), 147–201, esp. 162, 168 ff.; Fred Kleiner, *The Arch of Nero in Rome: a Study of the Roman Honorary Arch before and under Nero* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1985), summarising earlier scholarship. Kleiner, *Arch of Nero*, 11–13, notes the functions of passageway and statuary base combined in the Roman arch; many arches were not celebrations of military victories but “engineering feats and other public works projects of the emperor” (ibid., 28). The three arches described by Livy erected in the Forum Boarium and Circus Maximus by Lucius Stertinius on his return from Spain in 196 BCE, who did not seek a formal triumph, are the earliest known arches (ibid., 11–13). On arches from the period of Augustus, see ibid., 20–50; Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, 82, 86–87 et passim.

109 See Claudian's panegyrics on the consulship of Probinus and Olybrius; the description of Time and Nature in *De consulatu Stilichonis* 11.424–43 and his triumph as a universal empire, ibid 111: 30–98. On *adventus* as triumph in Claudian's panegyrics on Honorius, see MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 52ff; at 212 she calls Claudian's poems on the fourth and sixth consulship of Honorius the “last full descriptions of imperial *adventus* in the West”.

110 Claudian, *Panegyricus de Quarto Consulatu Honorii* 585–92 on gem encrusted, embroidered, golden embroidered emperor's toga; *De consulatu Stilichonis* 11.339–61 on the consular toga “woven by Minerva”; *De raptu Proserpinae* 11.34–35, 11.41–54 on the garments of Diana and Proserpina; *Panegyricus de Sexto Consulatu Honorii* 165–66 on the *palla* of the river god Eridanus.

111 See MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, for discussion.

112 Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 1.276–93 describes the pall of Justinian woven with images of his triumphs; see also 1.314–333; at 1.338–344 he says that God after the Incarnation shifts

This super-natural artifice creates continuity between precious artefacts or rulers and the space they occupy, conceived as illuminated by their radiance; thus the setting may become a kind of ornate surround, like a niche or sanctuary.¹¹³ Cassiodorus' fragmentary panegyric probably on the accession of the Gothic ruler Vitiges and his marriage to Matasuntha describes how the queen's beauty outshines the jewels with which she is laden as she appears from her palace, radiant with marbles and mosaics.¹¹⁴ Artefacts and person are either presented as part of a single essence, so that artefacts 'emanate' the sacred power of the figure or the two have a symbolic connection, founded in a typological relation, like the eschatological symbolism of gems.¹¹⁵

This attenuation of the distinction between objects, people and spaces is a strategy in late antique and Early Christian sources which place them in the same realm of super-natural wonder that defies nature and reason alike. In this exalted realm of artifice, things are apparently increased in being. The Byzantine descriptions suggest the creation of spaces so decorated that the golden light reflected from the ornament appeared like an emanation from the emperors and their attendants; a presence which created an atmosphere.

Crucial to this is the use of the reflective materials, notably gold mosaic, in producing an artificial, super-natural atmosphere suggested in the panegyric descriptions of transport by those who beheld it. Corippus emphasises the orchestration of decoration and regalia, with the reiterated topos of the imperial splendour that rivals the sun.¹¹⁶ He describes how the "barbaric youths"

honours from the sun to the Roman (i.e. Byzantine) emperor; see IV.116–30 on the cosmic iconography and dazzling splendours of the throne room.

113 Such settings are depicted in consular diptychs, where the allusion may be to actual spaces, like the box at the circus or hippodrome. See *Panegyrici Latini* I, 3.11.3 on the presence of Maximian within the palace "as within the innermost sanctuary" (MacCormack, *Art and ceremony*, 191, n. 163, 269); Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 28–9, on the jewelled dress of the figures in the Misorium of Theodosius. Cf. Prudentius, *Psychomachia* ll.852–3 on the Temple of Soul whose coloured jewelled walls live and breathe.

114 Discussed by MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 233, n. 337, 237–38, 258. See also Cassiodorus, *Variae* I.6.2 (CCSL 96), on the *varietas* of the marble decorations in the basilica at Ravenna.

115 Eusebius describes Constantine at the assembly of the Council of Nicaea as a "heavenly messenger of God" whose purple and jewelled robes "glittered as it were with rays of light", *Life of Constantine* 111.10, translated Ernest Richardson, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 2, I, 522.

116 Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* 111.191–209 on the throne room whose dais is like the vault of heaven; IV.99–101, 243, on the sun and the consul in triumph (*ovans*), whose ceremonial is another light and on the lictors as like stars in heaven.

in diplomatic entourages gaze with awe at the palace and gold arms of the cohorts, believing the palace is another heaven.¹¹⁷ Eusebius described how gold of the ceiling of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, appeared like a “great sea” which makes the church flash with light and the gilded roof of the Church of the Apostles, Constantinople dazzled the beholder from afar.¹¹⁸

There were precedents for lavish cosmic decorations, like the planetary decorations of the hall where Septimus Severus supposedly gave judgement, or, notoriously, the revolving dining room of the Domus Aurea.¹¹⁹ As Gage noted, there are also literary precedents in the palace of Alcinous (*Odyssey* VII.86–102) with its shining, “starry” materials, precious statues and eternally fruitful orchard, in Lucian’s *De Domo* with its golden ceiling like a starry sky and its walls painted with spring flowers and the palace of Staphylos and Botrys in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* XVIII.67–90, with its walls set with gems and metals.¹²⁰ Lucian opens *De Domo* with the need for a man of letters to write descriptions of splendid interiors; beauty enters the soul through the eyes and fashions for itself the words it sends out. He also contrasts the unfading decorations to the fading beauty of flowers (*De Domo* 9).¹²¹

The flower topos appears in descriptions of cosmic decorations which stress the transformation from nature’s ephemera to its ‘eternal’ jewels or

117 Ibid., III.234–44; cf. III.102 on the palaces of the New Rome which rival heaven.

118 *Life of Constantine* III.36, IV.58.

119 See L’Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*, 35; Suetonius, *Vita Caes.* 6.31.2 on the Domus Aurea. See Janes, *God and Gold*, 43–4, on the sumptuous decoration of ancient temples. Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana* 1.25.3 describes a sapphire dome hung with images of the gods which appear gold in Babylon, where the king sat in judgement; see L’Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*, 19–27, on the Persian origins of the cosmic throne room. On the basilica as the sanctuary of the god on earth, see Krautheimer, “The Constantinian Basilica”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967), 117–40, esp. 124. The cavernous Mithraeum with its planetary decoration suggests an analogy to ‘cosmic’ church decorations. Janes, *God and Gold*, 32–34, discusses the evidence for gold mosaic in the palace of Diocletian at Split, the imperial residence at Trier and Piazza Armerina, Sicily.

120 John Gage, *Colour and Culture*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 57.

121 The ending of Lucian’s description suggests that it formed the introduction to a course of lectures. He cites the setting of *Phaedrus* as illustration of the way that passion for speech is enhanced by beautiful places (*De domo* 4). At 7 Lucian insists on the restrained decoration of the hall, by analogy with modestly adorned women, recalling Cicero, *Orator* 23.78–79. The work however also contains a speech by an opponent who gives a caricature of Atticism, attacking the description of any ornament as distracting. At 11 the peacock’s fan, with its colours changing in the light, is also a figure for the beauty of the hall. The hall includes a gallery of mythological scenes, culminating with Medea, favoured subject of epigrams on artworks.

marbles.¹²² In this topos of coloured marbles as a “flowery meadow”, the stones were both part of the *exornatio mundi* and represented it.¹²³ The descriptions show the importance of the poetic-rhetorical tradition, maintained and preserved by the Sophists, and the status of church decoration as the new locus for displays of literary excellence, rooted in study of the old masters.¹²⁴ Henry Maguire gives sophistic topoi of springtime delights as a source for Byzantine Marian iconography.¹²⁵ Paul the Silentiary invokes “the thundering strains of Homer” in description of the “marble meadows” of Hagia Sophia. Choricus’ description of marble revetment in St Sergius, Gaza (*Laudatio Marciani* 1.25) and in St Stephen, Gaza (*Laudatio Marciani* 2, 40) also compares its graining to the variety of painting.¹²⁶ His description of the decoration of the lateral apses of St Sergius with their trees and vines swaying in the breeze (*Laudatio Marciani* 1.32) reads like a topographic set-piece; further allusions to trees and birds in the decoration (1.35; 1.37) produce Homeric quotation.¹²⁷

The theme of *exornatio mundi* is thus interwoven with the theme of artifice which transcends or rivals nature, a theme nourished theologically but also rhetorically, through the sophistic traditions to which the Byzantine *ekphraseis* are heir.¹²⁸ (The theme appears also at the end of the antique pagan tradition,

122 The tenth century poet Joannes Geometra called the marbles of Hagia Sophia flowers that will never wilt (PL 106, 943); the twelfth century Greek preacher Philagathos contrasted withering flowers with the everlasting marbles of the Cappella Palatina, Palermo, cited in Rosario Assunto, *La critica d'arte nel pensiero medievale* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1961), 116–17. On Philagathos, see Maguire, “Originality in Byzantine Art Criticism” (1995), repr. *Rhetoric, Nature and Magic in Byzantine Art* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1998), 102.

123 See Leo VI, *Sermon* 34, on the church built by Stylianus Zaoutzas, who claims that bees would graze there in the marbles; Gregory of Nyssa, *Laudatio S. Theodori* (PG XLVI, 737–740) on a martyrdom where the paintings showing the martyr’s deeds adorn the church like a beautiful meadow; *Greek Anthology* I.10 on the narthex of the Church of Polyeuctus, decorated by Juliana; Procopius on the marble revetment of Hagia Sophia, *On Buildings* I.1. For discussion of this topos, see Maguire, “Originality”.

124 The most extravagant example is Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio S. Sophiae* and the description of the ambo of Hagia Sophia (*Descriptio ambonis*), trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*.

125 Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 23, 42–52.

126 Cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.6.2 (CCSL 96), on the art which conquers nature in the delightful *varietas* of pictures created in the marble mosaics in the basilica at Ravenna.

127 Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 69.

128 Theological and sophistic themes are intertwined in the epigram on the narthex of the Church of Polyeuctus (*Greek Anth.* I.10), where nature is said to have hidden the ‘flowering’ marbles in the earth until the moment came to use them for the church. The poem



FIGURE 3.11 *Hagia Sophia, completed 562, upper gallery showing marble striation.*
COURTESY HAGIA SOPHIA MUSEUM, ISTANBUL. PHOTO: JOSEP LLAURADÓ,
LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA 2.1.

in Symmachus *Epist.* I.14.4 on Ausonius' *Moselle* where the fish depicted are "beyond the gifts of nature" (*quae tu pigmentis istius carminis supra naturae dona.*) The coloured and striated marbles show nature's *poikilia* transformed in the eternity of the church. These descriptions conceive architectural spaces as though they were habitats or total environments; this often requires that levels of symbolic allusion are discovered, a theme present already in the earliest account of a church building, Eusebius' panegyric to Paulinus of Tyre (*Church History* x.4).¹²⁹

of the Second Sophistic *Imagines* of the Elder Philostratus comes close to hexaemeral themes when he suggests that whoever wants to attribute the invention of painting to the gods could discuss the "appearance of the earth at the time when the Seasons paint the fields" and the appearance (*phainomena*) of the heavens.

129 As bride, the Church is termed a *nymph* (*nymphē*) and the references to array and blossoming have rhetorical resonances as well as referring to Isaiah 61.10–11. Eusebius draws on *Timaeus* in his discussion of the church as constructed in likeness to divine archetypes (x.4.25–26, x.4.55). Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography* III.168–169, compares creation to the preparation and decoration of a house where God, like a king, places his image, man, who is served by all creation and completes and adorns the building.

The church whose decorations show the world appears to create its own light. Procopius insists that radiance lies within the brilliant marble of Hagia Sophia, so that it rivals the light from gold or fire or outshines the sun.¹³⁰ Paul the Silentiary likewise says that the gold mosaic of Hagia Sophia is like the midday sun, the lamps like stars. Prudentius compares the gilded beams of San Paolo to the rising sun, and the glass on the arches to a flowery meadow (*Peristephanon* 12.45–54). Sidonius Apollinaris describes a church in Lyon built by Bishop Patiens (*Epistles* 11.10) as filled with its shining light, its golden ceiling rivalling sunlight and its mosaic green as a meadow in bloom. The *tituli* of mosaics rehearse similar themes, like those composed by Venantius Fortunatus which reiterate the radiant effects of materials, the light captured in a building or created “sine sole” by their splendour.¹³¹ This world of artifice is celebrated in lines from the anonymous seventh century *titulus* of the apse mosaic of S. Agnese fuori le mura, Rome:

Aurea concisis surgit pictura metallis
Et complexa simul clauditur ipsa dies
fontibus e niveis credas aurora subire
correptas nubes roribus arva rigans
vel qualem inter sidera lucem proferet Irim
purpureusque pavo ipse colore nitens.¹³²

130 Procopius, *On Buildings* 1.1.30, 1.1.54 on the radiance of the marble; he refers to the Homeric golden chain and insists on the illusion of weightlessness in the structure. Cf. *ibid.*, 1.4.5 on the churches of ss Bacchus and Sergius and ss Peter and Paul which outshine the sun with the splendour (*aglaia*) of their marbles; 1.4.25 on the Church of Acacius where the brilliant light of the columns and floor makes the church seem covered in snow; 1.8.10 on the sanctuary of St Michael where the colour of the court is like snow; 1.10.20 on the *Chalkē* of the palace whose marbles imitate emerald or fire; 1.11.6 on the Archadianae from whose columns and marbles comes a brilliant light which flashed back the sun's rays almost undimmed. Cf. Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio S. Sophiae* on the dome, “like the firmament which rests on air” (translation Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 83).

131 See the *tituli* quoted in Assunto, *La critica*, 45–6. Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 46, quotes the *titulus* of Sant Andrea Apostolo, Ravenna, which speaks of outer light shut out by walls, with the mosaic bringing the splendour of a new light. Cf. Paulinus of Nola's descriptions of the *tituli* of the mosaics and paintings with which he decorated the Basilica of Felix at Nola; see Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 20–23.

132 Quoted in Luigi Grassi, *Teorici e storia della critica d'arte* (Rome: Multigrafica editrice, 1970), 1, 96: “the golden picture rises from precious tesserae, as though daylight is enclosed in its clasp. You would think that the clouds rose up, hastened at dawn from snowy sources, and [daylight] scattered the fields with dew or the purple peacock, shining with



FIGURE 3.12 *Hagia Sophia, dome.*

COURTESY HAGIA SOPHIA MUSEUM, ISTANBUL PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

In the preface of the third book of *De diversis artibus* (*Schedula diversarum artium*) of 'Theophilus', the author writes that the spirit of God has filled the artist's heart when he fills God's house with a variety of ornaments, when the decoration of the church, walls and ceiling have varied motifs and colours which show a kind of paradise to the faithful, brilliant with many flowers, green with leaves and plants.¹³³ The artist praises the Creator through his creature and the eye does not know where first to rest; ceilings flower like brilliant textiles, walls are like a kind of paradise, the light which enters through windows leads to admiration of glasswork and variety of precious work.¹³⁴

These repeated allusions to marble as a flowery meadow, as a sea and as giving forth dazzling light work at various levels; one of these is the evocation

its own colour, displayed its light like the rainbow through the stars". Thanks to Helen Conrad O'Briain for her comments.

133 'Theophilus', *De diversis artibus*, ed. and trans. C.R. Dodwell (London: Nelson, 1961), 62–64. Dodwell, xix–xxxiii, dates the treatise to the twelfth century. 'Theophilus' was a German monk and craftsman, also called Roger and possibly the goldsmith Roger of Helmarshausen.

134 Ibid.

of the *exornatio mundi* with plants on earth, marine life in the seas and light-giving stars in heaven.¹³⁵ Such things were in themselves types for their heavenly counterparts, as Eusebius said; a means of ascending from the visible to the invisible. They show nature as it reveals itself to those who see it through divine light; or the archetype of nature from Christ as Logos. The glitter of precious materials and the sparkle of marble lead the faithful “from the abundant light of the sanctuaries to the intelligible and immaterial light”.¹³⁶ This symbolic dimension was given theological foundation with pseudo-Dionysius. The original term for baptism, *phōtisma*, signalled its character as illumination and the extensive artificial illumination of Byzantine churches was described by travellers and writers of *ekphraseis*.¹³⁷ In short, the theme of precious materials which bewilder the gaze is interwoven with topoi of the landscape idealised by artifice which suggest sophistic origin and the stars and flowers of the *exornatio mundi*.¹³⁸

Ekphrasis and Fantasy

This returns us to what Gage calls the most important and original aspect in the Byzantine aesthetic: the dynamic description of the act of contemplation.¹³⁹ In description of the dome of Hagia Sophia, Procopius says

135 On the marine metaphors used to describe marble as a petrified or frozen ocean, and their material, poetic and theological allusions, as used by Paul the Silentiary and Nicephorus Xanthopoulos (thirteenth century) on the mosaics of the palace of Andronicus II, see Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 57; Fabio Barry, “Walking on Water: Cosmic Floors in Antiquity, Byzantium and Christendom”, *Art Bulletin* 89, 4 (2007), 627–57.

136 Hypatius of Ephesus, *Fragment of “Miscellaneous Enquiries” addressed to his suffragan bishop Julian of Atramytion*, in Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 116–17. The *titulus* of the mosaics in SS Cosmas and Damian (526–30), Rome, where the Lamb of God is shown on a hill from which the four rivers of paradise flow, speaks of the house of god shining with bright materials in which the precious light of faith gleams more brightly; see Grassi, *Teorici*, 1, 96.

137 See Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 45, 47.

138 For an overview of this ‘hexaemeral’ theme in early Byzantine decoration, see Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean*; on the originality and conventionality of the topoi of Byzantine church descriptions, see idem, “Originality”, 101–14; idem, “Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art” (1974), in *Rhetoric, Nature and Magic*, 113–40; Cyril Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17, 1963, 55–75.

139 Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 57.

All these elements fit together miraculously on high, suspended from each other in mid-air and supported only by those closest to them, give the whole work a single, most remarkable harmony; yet the spectator is not allowed to linger long on the details of any one of the elements, for each attracts the eye away from what it was looking at and onto itself with the greatest of ease.¹⁴⁰

What is striking here is the ‘activity’ of the decoration of the dome in moving the gaze from one point to another so that it does not become beloved of one place (*emphilochorein*, rendered weakly by ‘linger’). Procopius conveys the tension between the details where the eye longs to lavish its attention and the harmony of the whole and implies that this tension is necessary to the work. The engrossing beauty of each part means that the disclosure of the whole involves a kind of movement that alerts us to the presence of the larger order. Procopius insists on the overwhelming effects of the church, its inscrutability and the bewilderment it produces in beholders.¹⁴¹

Here we see the emphasis on the optical effects of materials which is so striking a feature of Early Christian and Byzantine architectural description. Michael of Thessalonica (twelfth century) describes the optical effects of the gold in Hagia Sophia, which seems to run and fuse with the moisture of the eyes themselves.¹⁴² Photius in his *Tenth Homily* speaks of the Palatine Chapel of the Great Palace as seeming to whirl around, so that the viewer’s personal experience is transferred to the church.¹⁴³ Images of visual confusion could be

140 Procopius, *On Buildings*, I.1.47, trans. H.B. Dewing (New York: Heinemann, 1940). See Walter Hanno Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 37.

141 Procopius, *On Buildings* I.1.

142 Quoted in Mango and John Parker, “A Twelfth Century Description of St Sophia”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960), 237 (Description para. 3); Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 57. An allusion to the appearance of fiery light and moisture created by the ubiquitous gold comes also at para. 1. The description makes the cosmic alignment of the ekphrastic topoi very clear: the dome or arches like heaven (repeatedly compared to the cosmos), the marble revetment like flowers and the floor like a sea. In commentary, Mango notes the three levels of symbolism in Byzantine descriptions of churches—scriptural-topographical, theological and cosmic, typified by the twelfth century Syriac hymn on the cathedral of Edessa (ibid., 241).

143 Photius, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. Cyril Mango (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 187. See Ruth Webb, “The Aesthetics of Sacred Space: Narrative, Metaphor and Motion in Ekphraseis of Church Buildings”,

developed into figures for the Christian's understanding of divine providence. In *De ordine* I.1.2, Augustine discusses the apparent disorder in the *emblemata* of a mosaic as an image for our fragmentary knowledge of the divine ordering, the variety that disperses the spirit and our failure to see the larger pattern.¹⁴⁴ In *De ordine* this knowledge is sought through the arts as a means of the order that leads us to God.

Gage sees such allusions to instability, like the marine metaphors of the *ekphraseis* as carrying the idea of the incessant movement of natural things continually animated by vibrations—including the movement of the eye as it encounters reflective, gleaming materials.¹⁴⁵ Prudentius' description of the Vatican Baptistry (*Liber peristephanon* 12.31–45), talks of painting and its reflections in water, so that the water seems purple and blue, and the paintings seem to dance. The glitter of colour and movement of water are complementary; the water gives movement to the colour, giving the idea of light floating and carried on matter.¹⁴⁶ Prudentius makes it clear that the visual effects are caused by appearances and reflections—the phantasms that Plato called the natural counterparts to the illusory representations of the sophist (*Sophist* 266b–d).

If we follow the intimations of Procopius and Prudentius and Gage's suggestion, a concept emerges of ornament closely tied to visual impression. This was already suggested by Quintilian's association of *enargeia* with the fantasy.¹⁴⁷ At the end of the Byzantine tradition, Manuel Chrysoloras spoke of the *typos* received through the eyes into the *phantastikon*, the imaginative faculties of

Dumbarton Oaks Papers 53 (1999), 59–74, who notes that *ekphrasis* was seen as a discourse which led the reader around the place and thus related to *periegesis* (ibid., 65).

144 Augustine, *De ordine* trans. Silvano Borruso (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2007). Augustine uses "vermiculato pavimento" for the mosaic floor, *emblemata* for the pieces.

145 Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 57. Eusebius' description in *Life of Constantine* 111.36 of the ceiling of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, as a sea of gold, brings together effulgence and flux.

146 Prudentius, *Liber Peristephanon* 12.31–45. The Baptistry was built by Pope Damasus (366–84).

147 See Onians, "Abstraction and Imagination" on *enargeia* in Quintilian and 'Longinus' and the activity of the viewer's imagination in the topoi of Byzantine *ekphraseis*, whose precedents he sees in Pausanias, the *Imagines* of the Philostrati and the *Descriptions* of Callistratus. Discussion of patterning in marble appears in Pliny's remarks on the 'Augustan' and 'Tiberian' marble, so-called because discovered in their reigns, NH 36.11.55.

the soul.¹⁴⁸ In giving such centrality to themes of bedazzlement and bewilderment, the Byzantine and Early Christian writings make optical impression central to the experience of artifice.

The animation of materials created by the interaction of viewer and setting offers a counterpart to the notion of emanation that underpins the use of effulgent materials. If the viewer perceives the emanation of the divine through the act of viewing, then participation in the divine through light becomes a phenomenal reality.¹⁴⁹ The apprehension of the divine action of light through the optical experience of marbles, metals and mosaic is however accompanied by similes that emphasise the metaphoric nature of the experience. Plotinus' analogy of an image seen in a mirror to describe the presence of forms in matter, or of matter as a mirror offers a compelling image for the reflection of light from mosaic.¹⁵⁰

This said, there are two ways of viewing this aesthetics of light, which should be kept distinct. The Byzantine *ekphraseis* emphasise the suspension of reason in the experience of wonder and bedazzlement created by optical illusion. 'Longinus' similarly discusses how *phantasia* distracts us from apodeictic reasoning, and conceals its techniques beneath a "halo of brightness".¹⁵¹ The other way is to ground this visual-visionary ascent in an intellectual process via the understanding of light and vision as manifestations of the rationality of the physical world, and its ontological relation to divine emanation. In the Platonic tradition, notably Plotinus, dialectic provides this intellectual process, discussed through the metaphor of light. In pseudo-Dionysius the ascent by way of 'likeness' or 'unlikeness' involves dialectic, despite the importance of contemplation of the symbol. Thus dialectic provides the rigour and tension which leads to theoretic experience by intellectual means; as we suggested above, dialectic also arises from the concern with division, opposition, proportion and relation which are figured, pre-discursively, in pattern. The subsequent development of this philosophical light mysticism, in the studies of pseudo-Dionysius by Grosseteste and Bonaventure, provided the basis for 'light metaphysics' discussed below in treatment of *perspectiva*.

148 *Epistle* 3, PG 156, 57–60. Quoted in Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 254–55; for translation and discussion of the letter, see Baxandall, "Guarino, Pisanello and Chrysoloras", *JWCI* 28, (1965), 197–204. Chrysoloras states that we admire the maker's mind when we admire images, and the making of images is like sensory apprehension—an impressing of wax.

149 See Reuterswärd, "Windows of Divine Light".

150 Plotinus, *Enneads* I.1.8, III.6.12–13.

151 'Longinus', *On the sublime* 15.10–11.

The most famous description of a medieval church decoration, the *Liber de Rebus in Administratione sua Gestis* (1144–48), *Libellus Alter de Consecratione Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, and *Ordinatio* (1140–41) of Abbot Suger of Saint Denis was argued by Panofsky to draw heavily on pseudo-Dionysius for the symbolic role of representation and the “anagogic” transport he experienced through contemplation of the “many coloured stones” of the decoration he created.¹⁵² The endorsement of visual symbols in Suger shows an emphasis on the role of the imagination which also appears in commentary on the Areopagite’s work.¹⁵³ Suger also takes a delight in the preciousness and artifice of his church, of a kind consonant with the Byzantine *ekphraseis* writers. Like them he is fascinated by the kind of aesthetic otherworld he has created, as he says, suspended between heaven and earth.¹⁵⁴ Within this aesthetic realm, ethical action is suspended, hence we do not see the continuity of measure and proportion from universal ordering to moral qualities. In this sense Suger’s aesthetic contemplation is distinct from the Platonic ascent from *visibilia* to *invisibilia* which involves the passage from sensory particulars to wholes to the beauty of virtues and intellectual forms, despite Suger’s insistence on the mind rising through the material to and through light.¹⁵⁵ It is also notable that, while Suger deployed pseudo Dionysian inscriptions in Saint Denis, the dialectical element of the Areopagite’s theology has disappeared.

Here we see the problematic aspect of the aesthetic contemplation, which promises an ascent from the sensual via the fantasy to the mystical, while bypassing the intellectual and moral. As ornament is the mode of art which creates contexts in which we act and react, it is particularly implicated in this problematic. Suger shows the two-sided nature of the reliance on decoration to produce psychological affect. The state he describes is ambiguous; it may have a kind of super-intellectual character in which things are intuited in their

152 Suger describes his “anagogic” transport in *Liber de Rebus* 32. See Panofsky, “Abbot Suger of Saint Denis” (1946), repr. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, (Harmondsworth: Pelican 1955), 139–80. See *ibid.*, 162–65 for Suger’s echoes of Eriugena’s commentaries on pseudo-Dionysius; Panofsky notes Eriugena’s use of *claritas* to translate the expressions denoting the emanation of divine radiance. In dispute with Panofsky’s interpretation, see Peter Kidson, “Panofsky, Suger and St Denis”, *JWCI*, 50, (1987), 1–17, who notes the absence of references to pseudo-Dionysius and Eriugena in Suger’s writings.

153 See Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Criticism*, 168–69, quoting Richard of Saint-Victor, *Benjamin Minor* 15.

154 Suger, *Liber de Rebus* 32 on the realm to which he is lifted, between the “slime of the earth” and the “purity of heaven”. As Kidson, “Panofsky”, 7, notes, this “strange region” of aesthetic delight is not Platonic in character.

155 *Liber de rebus* 27.

symbolic reality or it may be a kind of luxuriance which is not only sensory, but fantastic. Suger *imagines* himself transported to another realm, in a sort of imitation of mystical ecstasy or the visionary experience of *theōria*, which was reached according to the Neoplatonists through dialectic.

Suger has been seen as the materialisation of pseudo-Dionysian theology on light and symbol. From this perspective, the high status which fantasy occupied in Medieval commentary on pseudo-Dionysius is pertinent. Alternatively, Suger may be regarded as the high point of the mode of *ekphrasis* that privileges fantasy as the means of rhetorical actuality and efficacy. Behind the latter is the sophistic tradition of ornate style which continues from Gorgianic rhetoric to the Second Sophistic and sophists such as Libanius who provided models for Byzantine *ekphrasis*.¹⁵⁶ The *Panathenaic Oration* of the Second Sophistic orator Aristides (117–181), for example, plays with images of dance and dream in description of the approach to Athens from the sea.¹⁵⁷ In Byzantine *ekphrasis* however, such images of movement develop into a language of disorientation, of ceilings dripping with gold, liquefied marble seas and spaces that seem to whirl around the viewer. They go beyond the calm delights of descriptions of artworks, linked to the elegant middle style of rhetoric, to describe states of sensory disorder and transport reminiscent of ‘Longinus’ account of the sublime *phantasia*—or of Dionysius’ critique of Gorgianic “dithyrambic” excess.

Important passages for the link between sophistry, fantasy and the status of artistic representations appear in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* and Philostratus the Younger’s statement that artists and poets share their *phantasia* and this produces the “actual presence” of the gods which poets represent on the stage.¹⁵⁸ The discussion in *Apollonius of Tyana* uses *phantasia* as the means whereby artists invent the idealised forms of the gods; it covers the theme discussed by Cicero in *Orator* 9 on the idealised form which the artist derives not from existing, particular models, but from a transcendent yet innate source.¹⁵⁹ Cicero says that artists find this form, which he associates with the Platonic

156 See Maguire, *Art and Eloquence*, esp. 22–52.

157 Aristides, *Panathenaic Oration* 155–57. Aristides was celebrated as a model of pure Atticism. On the dating of the oration, thought to be delivered during the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in 155 CE or 167/168 CE, see Estelle Oudot, “Aelius Aristides and Thucydides: Some Remarks about the *Panathenaic Oration*” in *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome and the gods*, ed. William V. Harris and Brooke Holmes (Leiden, Brill, 2008), 32, n. 7.

158 Philostratus the Younger, proem to *Imagines*, arguing the insufficiency of *symmetria* as the basis of art; see Pollitt, *The Art of Rome c. 753 BC to 337 AD* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 225.

159 Cicero’s discussion reappears in Plotinus, *Enneads* v.8.1.

idea, by cogitation—the faculty at the boundary of internal senses (notably *sensus communis* and fantasy) and the intellectual faculties which gave particular judgements of things.¹⁶⁰ In naming the faculty which created forms of transcendent things within the soul of the artist as the *phantasia*, Pollitt argues that Philostratus shows the influence of Stoic *phantasia kataleptikē*, the accurate representation of a real impression.¹⁶¹ A similar claim appears in Dio Chrysostom's *Twelfth Oration*, where Phidias speaks of the *phantasia* which is the source of inspiration of artists and poets, providing an image which shows the divine nature of the gods. This artistic vision is harder for artists to capture, as their craft is slower in execution.¹⁶² Philostratus' postulation of the fantasy as the source of the artist's idea is repeated in Renaissance art theory, but this leaves an issue: the accurate representations of the *phantasia kataleptikē* were part of a Stoic epistemology in which universal forms did not exist.¹⁶³ The *phantasia kataleptikē* provided trustworthy representations, unlike the shifting appearances or illusions in Platonic comments on phantasms or *phantasiai*, but they cannot show how an artist intuitively apprehends universal forms. The question of how images, invented and apprehended by means of the fantasy, relate to universal concepts and ideals will resurface through these pages.

The Byzantine *ekphraseis* thus appear to mingle the hexaemeral theme of creation as an object for human contemplation with the wonder and awe at the illusion which consummate artifice should produce in rhetorical prescriptions. These descriptions play with levels of illusion and analogy. The visual impressions are 'true' insofar as they are created by real things (gold, marble, water) yet become meaningful through imaginative, metaphoric association. In its growth from imperial ceremony, such use of ornament creates an environment where a kind of synaesthetic awe was designed to overwhelm those who experienced it and suspend critical engagement. In this sense it is non-dialogic, as 'Longinus' noted in his comments on the emotional potency of the *phantasia* and its ambiguous relation with thought. We might distinguish these effects from Augustine's comments on art, where the encounter with

160 For discussion of the *cogitativa*, see Summers, *Judgment*, 198–227.

161 Pollitt, *Ancient View of Greek Art*, 52–5, 61, dates an aesthetic founded in *phantasia* to the late Hellenistic period but whose exposition appears in Graeco-roman sources. His "*phantasia* theory" however rests on the hypothesis of lost works by Posidonius as the missing link between the Stoic *phantasia kataleptikē* and rhetorical or literary allusions to the *phantasia*.

162 Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 12.70–1, discussed Pollitt, *Ancient View of Greek Art*, 204–5. 'Longinus' also promotes the identification of *phantasia* with thought, and with the emotionally charged representation which brings things before the audience's eyes.

163 Pollitt, *Ancient View of Greek Art*, 54–5, 61, attempts to resolve the question.

art concerns the perception of structures of proportion and rationality.¹⁶⁴ Yet Augustine also discusses the combinatory power of the fantasy, which enables it to manipulate and invent new composites, and formulates the paradox of art as *mendax*, the deception made for entertainment.¹⁶⁵ Such art is paradoxical because the ‘truer’ it is to its nature, the ‘falsier’ it is; art’s exemplary (‘true’) form is illusion (‘falsity’). This paradox echoes Gorgias’ remark on tragedy that those who are deceived are wiser and more justly deceived than those who are not deceived.¹⁶⁶

Augustine’s comment, like its Gorgianic antecedent, concerns theatre. However, it is pertinent to ornament, so central to the creation of artificial, ‘super-natural’ settings. From antiquity over-reliance on ornament for the performance of power was open to critiques of theatricality and empty ostentation. The super-naturalism discussed by L’Orange in the Ara Pacis frieze as “nature touched by god” thus has its place in these tensions between illusion, fantasy and artifice. In Byzantine and Medieval writers, the experience of artifice involves reflections on processes of perception and imagination.

We might here see theatre and ornament as working together or in parallel. We have suggested that the most engaging aspect of the Early Christian and Byzantine architectural *ekphraseis* is the dramatising of the relation between space and viewer, in the viewer’s active creation of the impressions that cause the illusion of movement or apprehension of the complex totality of ornament within a space. As we shall see, this aspect reappears in Renaissance conceptions of ornament, but returned to sophistic guise, with all the associations of fantasy to the fore. Mosaic then becomes largely a framing device and the dazzling effects of gold are no longer theophanic but a way of grasping the decorative totality of a framing area, in contrast to the scenographic organisation of an *istoria*.

164 See *De ordine* on *ratio* (reason-relation) as the measure which delights in all the arts; *De immortalitate animae* on art as lying in immutable numeric relations, whose seat is in the spirit; *De musica* on equality as a principle of beauty. See Svoboda, *L’Esthétique de S. Augustin*, 25, 55, 85, for references.

165 On the combinatory imagination, see *Seventh Epistle*; for art as *mendax* see *Soliloquies* 11.10–18; 11.35, discussed in De Bruyne, *L’Esthétique du Moyen Age*, 54. In *Etymologiae* XIX.16.1 Isidore commented “*pictura autem dicta quasi fictura*”, adducing images linked with poetic or sophistic invention, such as chimaeras or Scylla; discussed in Assunto, *La critica*, 47; De Bruyne, *L’Esthétique*, 56; Summers, *Michelangelo*, 48–9. In *Soliloquies* 11.10–18 the combination of truth and falsehood in representations and the comparison with mirror images recalls Plato’s meditations in *Sophist*.

166 Plutarch, *De glor. Ath.* 348c, in Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903, repr. 1961), at Gorgias, fr. B 23.

As narrative naturalism reappears, the relationship of framing ornament and *istoria* has to be reworked. However, this reworking does not abandon the themes of illusion and fantasy; rather, it develops them in both ornament and *istoria* and into a new relation between the two.

PART 2

Fragment and Design



Architecture and the City

Part One showed various ways of conceiving ornament, which develop from accounts of cosmic design in Platonic, Stoic and Christian thought and from rhetorical and sophistic concerns with persuasive argument. A third line was an understanding available in the light of Aristotelian philosophy, where ornament provides the accidental qualification of an argument or thing in its circumstances of appearance, endowing it with an appearance of actuality. Where these traditions meet is in poetry and in figured speech, whether regarded as *integumentum*, allegory, symbol, fable or mere trope.

The rest of the book will look at what happens to these conceptions of ornament in the Renaissance. We shall see how providential conceptions of the order and ornament of universal design, paradigm for human *poiesis*, interact with the rhetorical claim that the ornaments of speech showed the virtues of a thing. Renaissance discussions also develop the ancient rhetorical interest in the historicity of language and its ornamental value. The exploitation of ornament by the Humanists to promote their claims for cultural renovation through antiquity is thus a recurring concern of the coming chapters, often linked to the theme of fragmentation. The crucial point about ornament as fragment is that its ‘virtue’ or ‘praise’ becomes an inherent property, which the fragment confers when conjoined. For this reason, questions of insertion become fundamental, leading to debates on exclusive versus eclectic imitation that have famous manifestations in Ciceronianism and Petrarchism.

Bruni: Civic Ornament

We start with the Florentine Chancellor Leonardo Bruni (1370–5–1444) and Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) in *De re aedificatoria* (printed 1485).¹ Both

1 Paolo Portoghesi dates *De re aed.* to c. 1443–52 in his introduction to Alberti, *L'architettura*, trans. Giovanni Orlandi (Milan: Il Poliphilo, 1966), xii. For Bruni's life and career, see Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, rev. edn. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, trans. James Hankins, 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Cesare Vasoli, “Bruni” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1972), XIV, 618–33; Bruni, *Opere Letterarie e Politiche*, ed.

attempt to reconcile various understandings of ornament and work across textual and visual levels. They raise the question of ornament and architecture, which should not be reduced to the question of architectural ornament.² The relation of architecture and ornament includes the extension of *ornatus mundi* in *De natura deorum* from created species to human works, the fashioning of the context and the links between contexts, the ‘topical articulation’ discussed above and the mediation between the particular and ephemeral and the universal and immutable. Gadamer in *Truth and Method* discusses the contextual character of architecture and the “decorative perspective” it asserts.³

The view of architecture as civic ornament and vessel of historical values and cultural continuity (or “recovery”) in Bruni and Alberti has an authoritative earlier statement in the Theodosian Code, with its injunctions to respect the ornament of public buildings after the suppression of pagan ritual.⁴ The Code shows understanding of architectural ornament tied to its historical character; thus Codex XVI.10.5 forbids sacrifice but insists that the “ornaments of public work” shall be preserved.⁵ The notion of ornament is linked to the civic sphere, and it forms the visible vessel of continuity with antiquity, which can carry over from pagan into Christian culture. Such continuity makes transformation possible, as the pagan temples whose “ornaments of public works” are to be maintained can be converted to Christian use.⁶ The Theodosian Code’s appeal to public *ornatus* as requiring pride in civic institutions and the tradition they embody is fundamental to understanding the historical significance of ornament.⁷

and trans. Paolo Viti (Turin: UTET, 1996), 9–47; James Hankins, G. Griffiths, D. Thompson, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, (Binghamton NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987). Bruni was chancellor of the Florentine republic from 1410–11 and 1427–44.

2 See Christine Smith and Joseph O’Connor, *Building the Kingdom: Giannozzo Manetti on the Material and Spiritual Edifice* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

3 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 156–59.

4 *The Theodosian Code*, trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).

5 Cf. *ibid.*, XVI.10.18 forbidding the destruction of temples once emptied of “illicit things” and *ibid.*, XVI.10.19.2 on the preservation of temples for other uses, once statues and altars were destroyed. Alberti, *De re aed.* VI.2 notes that the beauty of works is their surest preservation against man’s destruction.

6 Ornament *qua* motif is thus that part of ancient tradition which survives religious upheaval because it is not perceived as carrying cultic associations. Compare the use of ornamental motifs in place of holy images by the Byzantine iconoclasts.

7 See also Ernst Kantorowicz “The Sovereignty of the Artist. A Note on Legal Maxims and Renaissance Theories of Art”, 267–79, on Justinian’s laws on statues, images, decoration of public spaces and the relation of *ars publica* to *ars ecclesiastica*.

The most daunting aspect to study of Humanist literary usages of ornament is the range and the slipperiness of signification. Branko Mitrović counted over a hundred uses of *ornamentum* in Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, and judged the varied uses "inconclusive" in understanding of the term.⁸ Mitrović justly noted the distinction between ornament used as a way of attributing praise to qualities and architectural ornament. When Bruni speaks in the *Laudatio Urbis Florentinae* (c. 1403–4) of Florence as a "most ornate city", he attributes praise; when Alberti calls the streets and forum the principal ornament of a city (*De re aed.* VI.1.) he denotes the excellence of a class of things, like the description of virtue as the ornament of the soul in pseudo-Aristotle *Oeconomica* III.1.15–19.⁹

The example from the *Oeconomia* was known to Bruni, who translated the text, and is pertinent to his panegyric on Florence. Bruni's works illustrate the variety of usages—and the ends which they serve. Central to Bruni's idea of literary *humanitas* is the proper rendering and deployment of the figures of speech. Bruni sets out these ideas in *De interpretatione recta* (c. 1420) and *De studiis et litteris* (1422–29): "those ornaments of words and thought which illuminate speech like stars or faces and make it admirable, are the proper instruments of the orators, which we render in speaking and writing and turn to our use when the matter requires".¹⁰ In *De interpretatione recta* the capacity to conserve and render the ornaments and "gleam" of speech is called the "optima ratio" of translation, essential to capturing the *maiestas* of the text translated.¹¹ In *De interpretatione recta*, as in much of Bruni's work, this concerns the Latin translation of a Greek original.¹²

Bruni's insistence in *De interpretatione recta* on the rendering of figurative language as central to translation spreads into larger concerns with historical

8 Branko Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 122.

9 Bruni, *Laudatio Urbis Florentinae*, in *Opere*, 586.

10 "Iam vero illa verborum et sententiarumque ornamenta, que tanquam stelle et faces orationem illuminant et admirabilem reddunt, instrumenta oratorum propria sunt, que mutuabimur ab illis scribentes loquentesque, et in usum nostrum, cum res poscet, vertemus", Bruni, *Opere*, 264. Cf. *De interpretatione recta* on "translata verba quasi stelle quedam interposite orationem illuminat", *ibid.*, 166.

11 "Hec est enim optima interpretandi ratio, si figura prime orationis quam optime conservetur, ut neque sensibus verba neque verbis ipsis nitor ornatusque deficiat", *ibid.*, 160.

12 Bruni illustrates his arguments in *De recta interpretatione* with his versions of *Phaedrus* 237b–238c, 257a–c; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a–b, 1105a–b, 1178b; *Politics* 1322 a–b. The treatise opens with criticism of Grosseteste's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and concludes by reviling the infelicities of a medieval translation of the *Politics*. For Bruni's versions from Greek, see Vasoli, "Bruni". Bruni also wrote a Greek text (1439) on the Florentine constitution for the Greek delegates at the Council of Florence, which he presented to Gemisto Pletho for correction.

meaning and the relationship between eloquent speech and political order.¹³ In his funeral oration for Nanni Strozzi (1427), he says

when the ornament of words is added to the magnificence of the ceremony [*rerum*], the gratitude of the living becomes visible and the virtues and deeds of the deceased are disclosed and illuminated in a kind of splendour by the speech.¹⁴

This historical understanding is twofold; the ornaments of speech, which Brunetti in hexameter language calls “stars” and “faces”, illuminate the link between past and present, while they also distinguish things in their particularity. Here we might see the ‘tropical’ nature of Brunetti’s approach to historical meaning; if the *ornamenta* are essential to acts of display, their tropical character, revealing similarities in different things, is the light which illuminates the relation between the past and present. Brunetti thus gave privileged place to *ingenium*, which revealed things in their unique, historical situation and disclosed similitudes.¹⁵

Civic panegyric is exemplary for Brunetti’s conception of the role of the *ornamenta dicendi*. We have seen that Brunetti regards ornament as central to translation, and discusses the latter in terms of movement between the arts: in *De interpretatione recta*, bad translation of Aristotle is likened to the disfiguring of a painting by Apelles, Agalophon or Protogenes.¹⁶ The *Laudatio* works with two forms of translation; translation of the city into words and carrying Aristides’ *Panathenaic oration* into the different circumstances of Florence.¹⁷

Christine Smith suggested that Brunetti composed the *Laudatio* after reading Aristides with the Byzantine Humanist Manuel Chrysoloras and that his attention to architecture reflects Chrysoloras’ introduction of Byzantine

13 Discussions of historical meaning here are focused on Brunetti’s literary works, not on his historiography.

14 “ornatu quippe verborum magnificentie rerum adhibito et vivendum gratitudo conspicua fit, et defuncti virtutes et opera quasi splendore quodam orationis illustrate patescunt”, *Oratio in funere Johannis Strozze* in Brunetti, *Opere*, 710. Brunetti opens with an evocation of Greek panegyric, speaking of Solon and the institution of funeral oration for those who die in battle.

15 “momento temporis ad rem se applicet”, quoted in Grassi, *Renaissance Humanism*, 23.

16 Brunetti, *Opere*, 150–52.

17 For Brunetti’s use of Aristides, see Baron, 192–95; C.L. Guest, “Figural cities: Brunetti’s *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* and its Greek sources” in *Rhetoric, theatre and the arts of design*, ed. C.L. Guest (Oslo: Novus, 2008), 126–45. On Aristides, see Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 254–97. Menander Rhetor refers repeatedly to Aristides in his discussion of praise of cities.

techniques of *ekphrasis*, derived from orators of the Second Sophistic, such as Aristides and Hermogenes.¹⁸ Echoes of Aristides' *Panathenaicus* appear in Chrysoloras' letter on the Old and New Rome, 4.8, on the approaches to Constantinople by sea and land. Chrysoloras' letter on the Old and New Rome, and his epistles to Demetrius Chrysoloras are attentive to the activity of viewing, in description of buildings valued for their historical character and ruinous state.¹⁹ Chrysoloras states that we are more moved by the beauty of representations than of the things they represent; it takes many living horses to make up the worth of a statue of a single horse by Phidias or Praxiteles, even if damaged and incomplete.²⁰ He describes our admiration for the stone leaf, the sculpted nerves and veins which we hardly notice in living creatures.²¹ Chrysoloras brings together the elevation of artifice, admired for its *energeia*, with the historical value of the prized artefact, whose injuries show its antiquity and worth. He thereby opens new possibilities for describing but also conceiving the architectural environment.

One of the most striking features of the *Laudatio* is Bruni's insistence on the physical fabric as the representational vessel of the city, in proper and eloquent relation to the *res* of civic life. In the *Laudatio*, the civic virtues of Florence—its prudence or magnificence—are its *maxima ornamenta*.²² As Florentines excel in these virtues, so their city is outstanding in its splendour, ornament and elegance: “splendore et ornatu et munditia superat”.²³ This notion that the virtues of the soul become visible as ornaments of the person endures in

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- 18 Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism: Ethics, Aesthetics and Eloquence 1400–1470* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 133–82, esp. 136–42. Bruni's *Commentarius rerum suo tempore gestarum* gives a warm account of his studies with Chrysoloras, for which he abandoned his legal studies.
 - 19 On the tradition of Greek descriptions of Rome, including Chrysoloras, see Smith, *Architecture*, 149–70. Chrysoloras' Letter was translated into Latin by Francesco Aleardi in 1454; see *Le Due Rome. Confronto tra Roma e Costantinopoli. Con la traduzione latina di Francesco Aleardi*, ed. Francesca Niutta (Bologna: Pàtron, 2001). For the Greek text, see PG CLVI, cols 23–54; C. Billò, “Manuele Crisolora. Confronto tra l'Antico e la Nuova Roma”, *Medioevo Greco*, n. “o” (2000), 1–26. The Letter was known to Guarino da Verona, to Bartolomeo Aragazzi, Francesco Barbaro and Poggio Bracciolini, whose *De varietate fortunae* echoes it. See Michael Baxandall, “Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras”, 183–204.
 - 20 Chrysoloras, letter to Demetrius Chrysoloras, PG CLVI, col. 58.
 - 21 Ibid. Having extolled artifice over nature, Chrysoloras ends by moving from praise for artists who create out of matter to God who created *ex nihilo*.
 - 22 Bruni, *Opere*, 570. The Florentines excel in “natural ability, prudence, splendour and magnificence” (“naturali quodam ingenio, prudentia, lautitia et magnificentia”).
 - 23 Ibid.

civic panegyric; Francesco Bocchi opens the dedication of his *Bellezze della citta di Fiorenza* with the statement that “the ornament of the person, which is an exterior thing, often shows what the inner virtue of the soul is”.²⁴ Buildings are embodiments of the measure and harmony of virtue, as well as exhibiting the splendour and excellence of the city. Bruni’s sustained theme of the *convenientia* of Florence—as exemplar of harmony and decorum—may be compared with Cicero’s description of *convenientia* as what decorum attempts to achieve.²⁵ Bruni works with the various meanings of *convenientia*—accord, harmony, symmetry, conformity, suitability, fitness.²⁶ Like Alberti, Bruni uses the term *concinnitas* in an architectural context to signify harmony; in Bruni’s case, the presence of this harmony is described as an ornament.²⁷ The ornament is not just the decorative elements but the way that the building shows its praiseworthy qualities, as revealed by the ornate speech of encomium. Thus Alberti speaks of buildings ‘garlanded’ (*ridimitia*) with measure—apparently meaning that its presence renders buildings praiseworthy and excellent.²⁸ The subtlety lies in grasping how the figurative element works in such declarations—the metaphorical, decorative element which is not just absorbed into signification but remains and gives a colour or figurative shape, something which is both uniquely memorable and yet topical. The chorus of dancers who allude to concord as the fruit of good government in the Lorenzetti frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (c. 1337–39), suggest how this figurative element works. The figures are distinct from the trades or activities of the cityscape and

24 “L’ornamento della persona, la quale è cosa esteriore, fa palese sovente, quale sia dell’animo la virtù interior”, *Bellezze della citta di Fiorenza* (Florence: s. n. 1591), dedication to Christine of Lorraine, 2r.

25 The theme of decorum as *convenientia* is sustained through *De officiis* I, starting at 1.4.14 on the uniquely human sense of “quod sit ordo, quid sit, quod deceat”, which is the basis of the sense of beauty, loveliness and harmony (*convenientia*). At 1.28.100 the function (*officium*) of decorum is said to be harmony and preservation of nature (*convenientiam conservationemque naturae*).

26 Bruni says: “As it is fitting that in stringed instruments from different tones comes harmony, the most pleasant and sweet thing, so in this most prudent city every part is regulated so that the city itself resounds with the greatest concord, which delights the minds and eyes of men with its harmony”; “Quemadmodum enim in cordis convenientia est ex diversis tonis fit harmonia, qua nihil iocundius est neque suavius, eodem modo hec prudentissima civitas ita omnes sui partes moderata est ut inde summa quedam rei publice sibi ipsi consentanea resultet, que mentes atque oculus homines convenientia delectet”, *Opere*, 632–34.

27 See *ibid.*, 632 on *concinnitas*. For Alberti on *concinnitas*, see below.

28 Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* 1.2.

the personified Aristotelian virtues depicted diagrammatically on the adjoining wall, where spatial relation expresses hierarchy.²⁹ The dancers act as an ornament or garland, showing the 'praise of the city'. They are figural; both 'in' the city and about it.

Bruni's treatment of ornament in the *Laudatio* is similar; it pertains to delineation of the physical city and the appropriate mode of representation which makes its virtues apparent. When he calls Florence "prestantissima et ornatisima", the words reflect the ornate style of panegyric and *ekphrasis*, and the decorum between the urban fabric and the civic virtues it houses.³⁰ By contrast, other cities use ornament as a delusive outer covering (*cortex*) to hide inner squalor, material or moral; they exemplify the abuse of ornament as a deceitful, superficial enticement.³¹ As in the Strozzi oration, Bruni pairs ornate speech and magnificent setting which together illuminate the moral qualities praised in a historical figure.

The continuity of virtue throughout the city explains why Bruni insists on the diffusion of ornament throughout it, likened in a memorable passage to the presence of blood throughout the body.³² Bruni uses the same image of blood in description of the ornaments of oratory in *De studiis et litteris*.³³ The image may develop Cicero's remark in *De officiis* I.27.95 that decorum is inseparable (*confusum*) from virtue in the way that beauty is inseparable from

29 On this adjoining wall, Concordia sits beneath Justice and Wisdom, braiding the rope that binds citizens together, which is looped around the wrist of Common Good.

30 Bruni, *Opere*, 586.

31 Ibid., 578: "proque externo decore interne sordes".

32 Ibid., 576 "Non enim inter parietes minus ornamenti aut magnificentie habet quam extra; nec una aut altera via decora aut nitida est, sed universe totius urbis partes. Nam velut sanguis per universum corpus, sic ornamenta delitueque per universam urbem diffuse sunt" ("The outer walls have not more ornament and magnificence than those within, nor is one street or another handsome or beautifully kept and refined, but the parts of the whole city in general are thus. As blood is spread through the whole body, so ornament and charm are spread throughout the city"). Bruni restates: "in this city of ours there is no street, no area, which is not filled full with most lofty and ornate buildings", "In hac nostra nulla est via, nulla region urbis, que non amplissimis atque ornatissimis edificiis sit referta" (ibid).

33 "all the wealth (*opulentia*) of words, all the vigour and ornament, all the vital force and blood of speech we derive from the orators"; "Denique omnem opulentiam verborum, omnem dicendi vim et quasi ornatum, omnem orationis, ut ita dixerim, vivacitatem et sanguinem ab istis [oratoribus] sumemus", ibid., 264. The passage follows Bruni's discussion of the ornaments of speech as the true instruments of the orators.

health in the body.³⁴ Wherever virtue is, representation by words or things illuminates it as ornament; thanks to this ‘illumination’, we apprehend the vital force and quasi-organic totality of what is represented. The virtue disclosed by ornament, or as ornament, is represented in its liveliness and efficacy, as we saw in Roman rhetorical terminology.

The most densely ornamental passages of the *Laudatio* come where Bruni describes the city’s architecture. Bruni gives a graduated description of the spheres of the city, from centre to suburbs, with each displaying appropriate forms of ornament. Thus the suburbs and outlying villas are described through the conventions of the *locus amoenus*³⁵ while each successive step towards the centre displays an increase in beauty.³⁶ Once we have reached the hills which ‘set’ the city in its location like a jewel, or the boss of a *clippaeus*, the perspective is reversed and we look down into the city as a panorama. The centre and setting of the city adorn one another, in a way that stresses the visual unity of city and topography.³⁷

Bruni’s description employs figures imitated from Aristides’ *Panathenaicus*, which were in turn sophisticated imitations of Homeric *topoi*. However, Aristides’ handling of figures differs notably from Bruni’s.³⁸ Like the later Byzantine sophists, Aristides exploits references to the viewer’s physical and emotional movement, playing on contrasts of measure and boundlessness, reason and wonder. Athens’ setting and former maritime supremacy is the topical core of his panegyric. They provide the images which develop into reflections on the reciprocity, universality and measure that characterise Athens’ great achievements—her cultivation of *logos* and her *philanthropia*, exemplified by the *paideia* which she has given to the world.³⁹ The theme of vision as

34 “Ut venustas et pulchritudo corporis secerni non potest a valetudine, sic hoc, de quo loquimur, decorum totum illud quidem est cum virtute confusum, sed mente et cogitatione distinguitur”.

35 The charms of the outskirts include laughing hills, leafy groves, flowery meadows, delightful riverbanks and glittering springs; they are a paradise without equal in the world for beauty and delight (*ibid.*, 580–82). Bruni claims that the suburban villas seem to have fallen from heaven rather than been built by human hand, supplying a Homeric description of snow on the hills (*Odyssey* XIX.205).

36 “et ville lonquinos aspectus, et suburbia ville, et urbs ipsa suburbia pulchritudine vincit”, *ibid.*, 582.

37 *Ibid.*

38 See Guest, “Figural cities”. All references to the *Panathenaicus* come from Aristides, *Works* I, trans. C.A. Behr, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

39 Aristides speaks of his panegyric as restoring measure, reflecting the ordered discourse (*logos*) which is Athens’ greatest achievement (*Panathenaicus* 6). He draws on a tradition exemplified by Pericles’ funeral orations or Isocrates’ *Panegyricus*, where pre-eminence

measure and knowledge, which culminates in the description of *logos* as a mirror where the city sees her soul (*Panathenaicus* 397) is also counterbalanced by the allusions to vision as dream. The theme of movement as progression towards accurate representation exists in creative tension with movement as festive or choric. The most striking case is the description of the approach to Athens from the sea, likened to a pageant, chorus, a preparation for sacred rites and a path through the heavens, which appears to the traveller as a circling dance, a joyous dream and (with Homeric allusion) a god-given vision.⁴⁰ The visionary state arising from this cyclical movement denotes the festive character of the oratorical journey, confirmed when Aristides compares his panegyric to the peplos of Athena at the work's end.

The oration celebrates its object by its exploration of *logos*, its attention to the balance and interplay between argument, image and myth. Like later Byzantine *ekphraseis* it exploits descriptions of movement so that the reader has a sense of the ongoing disclosure of order. The reader's progressive movement as 'traveller' is enacted and these images of order and harmony are figures for the movement from the "boundless sea" (*Panathenaicus* 5) as a metaphor for subjectivity and relativism to the measure and reciprocity of *logos*. Unlike Byzantine *ekphraseis* where dazzling light goes beyond proportion, Aristides moves the reader through the text in a kind of harmonious dance.

We do not find in Bruni anything comparable to Aristides' emphasis on the measured movement which restores equilibrium. The outstanding Athenian virtue of *philanthropia*, introduced by discussion of the coastline, concerns the balanced relation between different things.⁴¹ For Bruni, the greatest virtue of the Florentines is prudence, which concerns historical reflection and he stresses the city's *convenientia*, its perfection and integrity.⁴² He imitates from Aristides the figure of the city as a shield composed of concentric rings, but

in *logos* and the universality of Athenian *paideia* as Hellenic culture are of central importance. The anti-type is not land-locked Sparta but Xerxes, depicted by Aristides 115–28 as an upstart Poseidon whose ambitions for world empire are described in oceanic metaphors of tsunami and continental displacement.

40 The allusion is to *Iliad* v.127, where Athena removes a mist from the eyes of Diomedes so he can distinguish gods from men in battle.

41 *Panathenaicus* 10, which describes how the promontories of the Attic coast "embrace" the sea.

42 Bruni does refer to Florentine *benignitas* and *humanitas* to exiles and other states, in a passage that recalls Aristides (*ibid.*, 616).

where the outermost 'ring' of Athens is the encircling sea, Bruni's description of the *clipaeus* suggests a work of artifice enclosed in its perfection.⁴³

The other point about Bruni's topographical presentation of Florence in its landscape is its scenographic character, which Hans Baron saw as an anticipation of perspective.⁴⁴ Baron's remark is acute in that *perspectiva*, the medieval discipline of optics, is applied to the projection of artistic depictions in Bruni's period.⁴⁵ The *Laudatio* in this sense might clarify the intellectual conditions which made unified scenographic depictions desirable. The *Laudatio* certainly shows a rhetorical continuity which could be compared with the continuity and artifice displayed by perspectival construction. Bruni's handling of topography also contrasts with the circling movements, the emergence of measure from fluidity and the shifts into dream or vision that appear in Aristides. The play of fantasy and the relation between light, movement and measure in the Greek work freeze into something less impressionistic and more simply and schematically delineated with Bruni. In particular, the sense of the fluid movement of the reader's gaze changes to the disclosure of a stable panoramic structure.

What is also lost in the *Laudatio* is the movement of *praxis* itself, the ethical activity which adjusts itself to the diversity of occasions. The twofold ornament of words and things overwhelms the virtue which is its cause and object. Bruni is sensitive to ornament as that which proclaims—or discloses—the appearance of virtue in its historical particularity. Throughout the *Laudatio* he insists on the virtue of Florence—especially the 'historical' virtue of prudence—as an ornament. In his guide to moral philosophy (*Isagogicon moralis discipline*, 1421–24), Bruni rehearses the Aristotelian definitions of prudence as doing, art as making, but notes that they are of the same kind, concerning variable matters, reflection and choice.⁴⁶ The *Laudatio* displays how objects

43 For Athens as shield or *aspis*, see *Panathenaicus* 159; the concentric shield is the culmination of allusions to circling, procession and choric dance.

44 Bruni's description of "the Florentine landscape . . . as one great scenic perspective" suggested "the first attempt . . . to discover the secret laws of optics and perspective", Baron, *Crisis*, 200. Cf. Bruni's *Dialogus ad Petrum Paulum Histriam*, set in Salutati's villa in Oltrarno, which gives panoramic views over the city.

45 On *perspectiva*, see Chapter 7.

46 "Versatur autem prudentia in his rebus, que non semper eodem modo fiunt, sed alias aliter, in quibus etiam consilium et electio locum habent . . . ars, inquam, que in eodem genere, que prudentia, versatur, sed in eo differt, quod ars in faciendo est, prudentia in agendo", Bruni, *Opere*, 236–38. He ignores Aristotle's concluding affirmation of *theoria* as the highest form of *praxis*.

of moral evaluation may be turned into works of artifice by their rhetorical representation.⁴⁷

The centrality given by Brunni to historical and ethical particularity, rather than metaphysics, as illustrated by his *Life of Aristotle* gives ornament an important role, as it becomes crucial to conveying past particulars to the present.⁴⁸ Brunni's legacy to subsequent Humanism in the matter of ornament can be seen as twofold. Ornament is the 'light' which shines forth as virtues are represented and illuminates past deeds for later ages. In this sense it is closely associated with historical meaning and with prudence, which involves historical reflection. As virtuous things are represented as 'ornaments' they however become objects of artifice to be imitated—thus becoming subject to criteria of aesthetic judgement. Something of this appears in Brunni's insistence on Florence as a perfect, unified body and the theme is elaborated in the analogies of building/body and building/city which preoccupy Renaissance architectural treatises. Brunni conceives buildings rhetorically and is not yet dealing with the art of building, although his depiction of the city as artwork prepares the way or need for a coherent account of architectural design and function.

Here we come to the second aspect of Brunni's conception of ornament. Imitation of ornaments implies fragmentation since they are translated into a new context. *De interpretatione recta* contains an early instance of a classical phrase which becomes widely used by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

47 Baron, *Crisis*, 207–09 notes that Brunni speaks of civic institutions in terms of harmonious relationships, described through the language of music and rhetoric. Baron concludes that the *Laudatio* was the first presentation of a civic constitution as a work of art. See Struever, *Language of History*, for discussion of this preoccupation with aesthetic ordering in early Humanism. Brunni's short Greek description of the Florentine constitution, written when republican institutions were losing power to Medici control, by contrast presents a relatively prosaic account of the 'mixed constitution' of Florence.

48 Brunni's *Life of Aristotle* (1429–30) prefers him to Plato in political philosophy for his concern with "common life and usage". The *Life* pushes Aristotle towards an idealised portrait of the orator, with his universal learning, his concern with *consuetudo* and the eloquence of his writings. Brunni's division of Aristotle's works prioritises works concerned with eloquence, followed by ethics and logic or dialectic ("praecepta disserendi") with natural philosophy and metaphysics—first philosophy -consigned to the last category (*Opere*, 426–528). The title of the *Isagogicon moralis discipline* recalls Porphyry's *Isagoge*, the famous Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* translated by Boethius, and underlines Brunni's ethical preoccupations. Cf. Brunni's denial of *furor* to Dante, whose writing was rather the product of prudent and diligent study, not inspired vision; see *Vita di Dante*, in *Opere*, 548–549. For Brunni's negative attitude to philosophy, see Jerrold Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism. The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

centuries, when Bruni likens Plato's sentence construction in *Phaedrus* to a mosaic pavement (*emblemate vermiculato*).⁴⁹ Even in *Phaedrus*, which takes for its theme the philosophical use of eloquence, Bruni's attention falls on the craftsmanship of the surface of speech. Bruni's approach to Plato, the writer of philosophical fables *par excellence*, thus shows the privileging of stylistic qualities over content; the "mosaic-like" setting of words that Bruni admires in *Phaedrus* prevails over his need to evaluate the content. Bruni's approach here shows the ascendancy of rhetoric as the discipline for evaluating literary works. In Bruni the tension between ornament as that which confers or illuminates wholeness and as a valorising fragment is already discernible.

Alberti: Architecture as Ornament/Architectural Ornament

In Bruni, the representation of Florence as an artwork poses the question of whether *praxis* may not also lose its quality of engagement in the idealisation of the *convenientia* of the city state. In Alberti, we find an account of architecture as the 'praise' of the city rooted in ethics which works with the dual nature of architecture as a setting for civic life and as object of artistic production.⁵⁰ The conception of ornament differs in these two approaches, which are bridged by discussion of building as a 'body' for the virtuous activities it houses.

Alberti works with the Vitruvian delineation of architecture as a subject "adorned" by an encyclopaedic range of disciplines.⁵¹ Alberti turns Vitruvian

49 "haec omnia verba inter se festive coniuncta, tamquam in pavimento ac emblemate vermiculato". Bruni, *Opere*, 168.

50 We shall not discuss Alberti's literary works, which differ in tone from the rationalism of his artistic theories; the disruptive satire *Momus* was written virtually alongside *De re aedificatoria*. For architectural images in *Momus*, see Smith and O'Connor, *Building the Kingdom*, 226–39. For an overview of Alberti's works, see Anthony Grafton, *Alberti Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000); on literary works such as the *Intercoenales*, see Mark Jarzombek, *On Leon Baptista Alberti: his Literary and Aesthetic Theories*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

51 "scientia pluribus disciplinis et variis eruditionibus ornata", Vitruvius, *De architectura* 1.1.1; see *ibid.*, 1.1.12 on architecture as "encyclos . . . disciplina". In Vitruvius architecture had three elements: building (*aedificatio*), construction of dials (*gnomice*) and mechanics, the second two abandoned by Alberti. Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 63–68, sees Alberti's choice of title as an attempt to fit architecture into the *scientia-ars* division derived from Aristotle's distinction between epistemic and deliberative knowledge. Architecture cannot be a science since it does not use deductive methods or deal with universals. However, as it conceives, oversees and judges things made by others, it is not an art either; the definition of

encyclopaedism to the delineation of a civic art where the harmony between technical expertise and humanist needs is set out. The harmonious body of decorum in *De officiis* becomes concretised and susceptible to numerical analysis. This body, as the setting for human life, may be viewed as the fitting ornament of the life carried on within it; in the theme of architecture as “dignitatem decusque rei publicae” we see the continuity with Bruni.⁵² Alberti’s success in reconciling various levels of discussion in *De re aedificatoria* means that interpretations differ concerning the privileged discourse in the work.⁵³ In Alberti’s use and definition of ornament we see the strain between the various conceptual levels in the work, as architectural ornament and architecture as ornament cannot be easily conflated. We might contrast this with subsequent treatises, such as Spini’s *Tre primi libri . . . intorno agl’ornamenti* (1569), where ornament in architecture, which brings its beauty and dignity, is identified with the orders, which Spini calls “maniere”, “specie” or “generi” of ornament.⁵⁴

There are two main intellectual discourses running through the work, aside from its wealth of detail. One of these concerns form, and the definition of formal terminology such as *partitio* or *lineamenta*, matters of long discussion amongst Alberti scholars. As Mitrović recognises, this formal level is informed by mathematics and ontology. The other level is ethical-rhetorical, shaped by Alberti’s reading of Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Ciceronian rhetoric and ethics. The work appears in dialogue with the *Nicomachean Ethics* from its opening, with the meditation on the relationship between the art of building and political science, the Aristotelian *architektonikē*. Alberti’s postulation of building as architectonic art shows that from the first lines of *De re aedificatoria* we are to understand architecture as

architecture as an art of judgement will become central in Daniele Barbaro’s Vitruvius commentaries.

52 Alberti, *L’architettura*, Preface, 13.

53 For an ontological corrective to rhetorical readings of Alberti, see Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, esp. 101–25. Amongst rhetorical readings of Alberti, see Alina Payne, *Architectural Treatise*, 70–88; Veronica Biermann, *Ornamentum. Studien zum Traktat De re aedificatoria des Leon Battista Alberti* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1997); idem, “Die rhetorischen Virtutes dicendi und Leon Battista Albertis Architekturtraktat”, *Pegasus Berliner Beiträge zum Nachleben der Antike I* (Berlin: Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture Known in the Renaissance, 1999), 53–64.

54 Gherardo Spini, *I tre primi libri sopra l’istituzioni de’Greci et Latini intorno agl’ornamenti che convengono a tutte le fabbriche che l’Architettura compone*, ed. Cristina Acidini in *Il Disegno Interotto. Trattati mediciei d’architettura*, eds C. Acidini, F. Borsi, D. Lamberini et al (Florence: Gonnelli, 1980), 41, 45, 60–62, 75 on rejection of the term order.

grounded in the ethical ordering of the city.⁵⁵ Like Bruni, Alberti sees building as an ethical activity which increases the honour and glory of the builder's family, descendants and city and gives representation to civic virtues, private and communal, bringing dignity and decorum to public life, profit and advantage to our work, delight, entertainment and health to our leisure.⁵⁶

The status of architecture as an expression of decorum and praise is evident in the titling of the books of the treatise, with Books 6 to 9 dedicated to the "Ornaments" of public, sacred and private buildings. These books deal with the way that buildings accommodate the activities they house in the most appropriate and dignified manner. The end and true art of building (*aedificatio*), Alberti says, lies in the creation of "whatever can be most beautifully fitted out for the noble needs of man".⁵⁷ Architectural types therefore follow the variety of civic activities; as in Bruni, the city is not an aggregate of buildings but a whole which encapsulates the totality of human life.⁵⁸ The titling of the books of *De re aedificatoria*, with the progression from *lineamenta* to matter and four books on ornament, might recall the stages of creation in hexaemeral literature, from making and the elements to the four days of adornment.⁵⁹ In each case, there is description of the creation and optimal disposition of the human habitat. Veronica Biermann argued that *ornamentum* pertains to a form in its specificity, as opposed to the schematic presentation of *lineamenta*—it appears when things are situated in a context.⁶⁰

Alberti finds architectural typology in human variety, which he describes through the metaphor of a lyre sounding in concord.⁶¹ If Alberti follows Plato in the idea that the city state is founded in the understanding of the soul, archi-

55 Cf. the role of architecture in civic life in Francesco Patrizi of Siena, *De institutione rei publicae* (c. 1471), Book 8.

56 Alberti, *L'architettura*, 13.

57 "quaecunque . . . dignissimis hominum usibus bellissime commendentur", *ibid.*, 2.

58 Bruni remarks tartly "a city is not a collection of walls and roofs, as the uneducated believe, but a multitude of people joined together by law", *De militia*, in *Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, 129.

59 Smith, *Architecture*, 9, quotes Manetti's praise of cities and houses in his celebration of the second creation of artifice which perfects the "rude" creation of the world.

60 Biermann, *Ornamentum*, 122, discussed by Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 41.

61 On human variety as the base of variety in building, see *De re aed.* IV.1: "homines, quorum causa constant aedificia, et quorum ex usu varientur, accuratius consideramus quid inter se differant", *L'architettura*, 265; on the lyre as metaphor for *varietas*, see *ibid.*, 65: "Nam, veluti in lyra, cum graves voces respondeant acutis et mediae inter utrasque ad concentum intentae resonant, fit ex vocum varietate sonora et mirifica quaedam proportionum aequabilitas".

tecture provides the body for this soul. Alberti's treatment of the building as body leads to further analogies, discussed in the same chapter—the building is like a living organism and the house is like a city whose various parts are like miniature buildings. The building as organism or city coheres due to the *compartitio* which divides, articulates and composes buildings into a single, harmonious work.⁶² The building as body is created from matter and the *lineamenta* (features, delineations or designs) whose connection and relationship is the principal source of beauty.⁶³ The organic metaphor points to an Aristotelian-Thomistic conception of beauty, and of art whose design processes follow those of nature. The house-city analogy works at the political-ethical level, well known from Aristotle, *Politics* I.1.⁶⁴ In creating the triple analogy body/building/city, Alberti creates tensions which will run through his work.

Following Aristotle, virtue is measure, and the *Nicomachean Ethics* work with various understandings of measure, as the mean between extremes or in the analogy of geometric and arithmetical proportion for distributive and corrective justice at Book V.3–4.⁶⁵ Thus when Alberti makes his famous analogies between the *compartitio* of the building and the living body, the ethical implications are very rich. Measure is not merely a modular system evolved from the human body but the proportion which governs the parts of the soul and its virtuous activities. If we recall an Augustinian conception of proportion as the relation between a thing and its apprehension, or understanding, then the art which furnishes the measured settings for acts is indeed significant.⁶⁶

Both numerical and ethical measure shape the proportionate character of the city which has its microcosm in the *economia* of the private house.⁶⁷ When

62 Alberti, *L'Architettura*, 65.

63 Ibid., 15, “nam edificium . . . corpus quoddam esse animadvertis: quod lineamentis veluti alia corpora constaret et materia . . . cohesionum modumque linearum inter se, ex quo praecipua pulchritudinis effectio emanarit”.

64 Alberti describes the private house as social microcosm principally in Books 5 and 9. Book 5 develops the city-house analogy, so that the relationship of civic order to architectural representation is constantly before us. The palace of the prince or leading citizen is at the core of city-house relations (we might recall Lorenzo de' Medici's fondness for the treatise), described as a progression of public, semi-private and private spaces; notable amongst the public spaces is the atrium or court which is compared to the forum or public square. The analogy also implies the appearance of spectacle spaces within the house, discussed below.

65 Alberti's examples of bad architecture frequently illustrate vices of excess (luxury, extravagance, self-glorification) which abandon the mean.

66 See Eco *Art and Beauty*, 77, for Aquinas' reference to this view of proportion.

67 For Alberti's other discussions of *economia*, see *Il libro della famiglia* (c. 1433–41).

Alberti uses the blending of musical tones to describe civic *varietas*, he speaks of grave and acute voices—a reference to qualitative proportion.⁶⁸ The proportions that govern design provide a “body” which is realised by the measured activity of virtue practised within buildings.⁶⁹ The variety of *praxis* which buildings house also informs Alberti’s interest in the way that topographies are composed to reflect the totality of human activities. An inductive discussion of the art of building which creates the loci for *praxis* is in sustained dialogue with reasoning on the essence and elements of architecture. Architectural variety is thus a representation which manifests the virtues of the activity housed and its relation to other kinds of activities—underlined by the house-city analogy.⁷⁰ In this way, we can perceive society as integrated and harmonious, rather than an aggregate or miscellany of functions.

At this level of discussion, ornament has a conspicuous role in fitting out buildings for their purpose. At VI.2 Alberti reflects

if all these [legal, military and religious] institutions, without which man could scarce exist, were to be stripped of the splendour and display of their ornaments [*ornamentorum apparatu et pompa sublata*], their business would appear insipid and shabby [*insulsum*].⁷¹

The passage is followed by an evocation of *ornatus mundi*—the splendour of the heavens and the beauty of the “painted” flowers in which nature “flaunts herself” (*sublascivire*) every day. Alberti’s insight that institutional architecture devoid of appropriate *ornatus* is shabby and insipid was indeed prescient.

68 See n. 61.

69 See Carroll W. Westfall, *In This Most Perfect Paradise* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), 52, on Renaissance architecture as “the representation in material form of significant content”; cf. *ibid.*, 57–62, on relations between buildings as accommodating various activities. Westfall discusses Alberti’s significance for Nicholas V’s urban programme in Rome.

70 See *ibid.*, 61: “A city filled with beautiful and properly ornamented buildings would reveal the existence of order, but it would also do more; it would facilitate that order by providing places for conspicuous participation in the activities that make order in the city”.

71 *L’architettura*, 445; translation adapted from Alberti, *Ten Books on the Art of Building*, trans. J. Rykwert, N. Leach and R. Tavernor (Massachusetts: MIT, 1988), 155. For a post-modern rendering, see Derrida, *Truth in painting*, 59–60, on Kant’s *parergon*. Derrida notes that if the *parergon* were detached, the lack on the inside of a thing (body or building) would appear. Struever, *Language of History*, 61, links the passage with Valla’s contention in *Elegantiae linguae latinae* Pref. 1.2 that *doctrina* without elegance appears “illiberalis” and “caeca”.

This however is only one aspect of Alberti's conception of ornament. The other comes in the distinction between beauty and ornament which appears to consign ornament to the extraneous. At VI.2 Alberti calls beauty "that reasoned harmony (*concinnitas*) of all the parts within a body" and the perfection achieved when nothing can be added or taken away, a formulation originating in Aristotle's discussion of the mean in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.2 and II.6, 1106a14–1107a27.⁷² The definition of ornament by contrast runs:

Ornament is a form of auxiliary light and complement to beauty . . . beauty is some inherent property, to be found suffused all through the body of that which may be called beautiful; whereas ornament, rather than being inherent, has the character of something attached or additional.⁷³

Alberti also recognises a corrective function in ornament; it colours, hides deformities or gives emphasis to the most attractive parts. In other words, it adjusts things so that they appear to full advantage in a certain situation—thus recalling Plato's fantastic mimesis. Alberti's beauty-ornament distinction is not an early version of Loos' *Ornament and Crime*.⁷⁴ It distinguishes the areas of beauty and ornament, with the first concerned with integrity and the second with relation or equipping. The judgement of beauty implies that a thing is considered as abstracted from its surroundings; ornament necessitates rendering a thing apt or fitting for its context. In this sense, Alberti follows the Augustinian distinction between the beautiful and the apt or the *kalos-prepon* distinction of *Hippias Major*. A naked body may be judged beautiful; once we consider the body in movement, or the body clothed, we are involved in discussion of ornament, as the rhetorical tradition shows. A conception of form as essence will see ornament as accidental; a view of architecture centred in ethics and decorum will regard it as indispensable. Alberti sees that

72 "sit pulchritudo quidem certa cum ratione concinnitas universarum partium in eo, cuius sint", *L'architettura*, 447; *Ten Books*, 156. The attainment of that which one could neither add to nor take away from in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6 arises from the discussion of exercise (*energeia*) of virtue which constitutes the good of the human soul, suited to the occasion.

73 *Ten Books*, 156; *L'architettura*, 447: "ornamentum quasi subsidiaria quaedam lux pulchritudinis atque veluti complementum . . . pulchritudinem quasi suum atque innatum toto esse perfusum corpore, quod pulchrum sit; ornamentum autem afficti et compacti naturam sapere magis quam innati".

74 See Maurice Howard and Michael Snodin, *Ornament: A Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 67. Payne, *Architectural Treatise*, 75 ff., notes the inappropriateness of reading Alberti's treatment of ornament as "structural rationalism *avant la lettre*".

architecture can and should be considered both in terms of beauty and in terms of ornament; the point is rather to understand where each consideration is proper. His distinction is not about ornament as a 'thing', but a relation.⁷⁵

Where Alberti's discussion concerns the totality and integration of a design, i.e. where form has a teleological character, the appeal to beauty and the analogy with the body are appropriate. Where buildings are regarded in relation to an activity or to other buildings, ornament becomes the mode of consideration, as reflected in the titling of Books Six to Nine.⁷⁶ Alberti's distinction also reminds us of one major difference between beauty and ornament: beauty is an absolute term in the sense that it never signifies something negative. The relativity present in ornament however means that it can be inappropriate or ill-conceived or even ugly; its proper use and understanding is therefore an important matter. So far there is no contradiction between the beauty-ornament distinction and the dedication of six of the ten books of *De re aed.* to ornament.

Alberti returns to the discussion of beauty in IX.5 with a restatement of the building/body analogy. He regards judgement of beauty as innate, although subject to variation according to taste. The organic character of beauty means that it lies in the relation of parts, named by Alberti *numerus*, *finitio*, *collocatio*, and *concinnitas*. *Concinnitas* arises from *numerus*, *finitio* and *collocatio* but is "something additional that arises from the connection and putting together of all these by which the entire appearance of beauty shines wonderfully" ("est amplius quippiam ex his omnibus compactis atque nexis, quo tota pulchritudinis facies mirifice collucescat").⁷⁷ If *concinnitas* is the perfection or completion of beauty, it is also a quality by means of which we perceive a thing to be beautiful.⁷⁸ Alberti's discussion of this final quality of beauty, described

75 See Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 151, on geometric decoration in Islamic art: "the geometry is a passage, at best a magnet, to something else that it does not identify but which the culture deems desirable". Grabar writes of architecture as ornament: "Without it, life loses its quality. Architecture makes life complete, but it is neither life nor art" (ibid., 193). Cf. Kavalier, *Renaissance Gothic*, 50: "Ornament is relational, an enhancement or revision of something else primary to the discussion; it frames the primary object for consideration".

76 Westfall notes: "The order of a society provides its beauty, and the activities of the subjects enhance that beauty, add luster to it and are therefore to be considered as ornaments", *Perfect Paradise*, 60. He discusses the ornamental character of a building's quality—its place and function in the "ordered structure of the city" (ibid., 61).

77 Alberti, *L'architettura*, 815, English translation from Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 110.

78 This discussion considers *concinnitas* as an aesthetic term rather than its application to proportion in design; on this see R. Tavernor, 'Concinnitas, o la formulazione della

in terms of effulgence, suggests comparison with the Thomist *claritas* which forms the third term of the definition of beauty whose first two terms are *integritas* or *perfectio*, *proportio* or *consonantia*.⁷⁹ The association of *concininitas* with the perception of beauty is also suggestive of Aquinas' emphasis on beauty as actualised in the relation between the object and the mind that has apprehension of it.⁸⁰

Aquinas' definition of *claritas* as the radiance of the beautiful object in its perfection also marked a distinction from Eriugena's use of *claritas* to render the emanation of divine splendour.⁸¹ However, Alberti does discuss *concininitas* as illuminating something beyond the particular object perceived; he calls it "spouse of the rational soul and reason" ("animi rationisque consortem"), and says that it embraces the whole life and affairs of man, moulds and moderates all of nature.⁸² In *concininitas* nature shows its harmony, rationality and perfection; *concininitas* is not so much a quality as the illumination of relation or order.

Here we can suggest why Alberti's discussion of the rational, quantitative, organic character of beauty uses a term with such ornamental associations as *concininitas*.⁸³ *Concininitas* generally designates an ornament of speech, and is

bellezza', in *Leon Battista Alberti* J. Rykwert and A. Engel eds., (Milan: Electa, 1994), 300–313; idem, *On Alberti and the Art of Building* (New Haven: Yale, 1998), 44–48; Joan Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 107–42 on the constitutive and ontological status of beauty in Alberti.

79 *Summa Theologiae*, 1.a.39.8, where *claritas* gives shining colour to things said to be beautiful: "unde quae habent colorem nitidum pulchra esse dicuntur". *Claritas* concerns the movement from proportion to light and so the ontological status of artworks; *colorem nitidum* might also recall Quintilian's discussion of ornament as making things more gleaming, *nitidiora*.

80 Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 70, 81–83.

81 On Eriugena's use of *claritas* see Panofsky, "Abbot Suger", 163–64; contrast Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 81–83.

82 "eam [concininitatem] quidem esse animi rationisque consortem interpreter... Totam complectitur hominis vitam et rationes, totamque pertractet naturam rerum. Quicquid enim in medium proferat natura, id omne ex concininitatis lege moderatur", *L'architettura*, 815. Mitrović's reading of *concininitas* as nature's attempt to achieve beauty in its works recalls the Aristotelian striving of essence to actualise itself (*Serene Greed*, 110–12).

83 For the classical sources for *concininitas*, see Smith, *Architecture*, 87–97; Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 112–17, who warns against exaggerating Alberti's dependence on rhetorical terminology at the expense of more fundamental philosophical structures of meaning. Cesariano in his 1521 Vitruvius commentary, *De architectura*, facs. repr. ed. A. Bruschi, A. Carugo and F. Fiore (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1981), 8r, uses proportion and *concininità* to describe music's affective power.

used repeatedly in Cicero and in Humanist discussions of rhetoric, such as the debate of 1485 between Pico della Mirandola and Ermolao Barbaro regarding eloquence and philosophy.⁸⁴ Cicero compared the “light” brought by *concininitas* to architectural decorations in a theatre or forum:

[The ornaments] derived from combinations of words lend great brilliance to an oration. They are like those objects which in the embellishment of a stage or a forum are called ornaments [*insignia*] because they stand out from the others.⁸⁵

Concininitas indeed carried pejorative associations with florid or juvenile Asiatic oratory, from which Alberti releases it.⁸⁶ His words recall Cicero’s discussion of the universality of rhythm in *De oratore* III, as Smith noted, and appear indebted to the discussions of *De officiis* 1.28.100 where decorum is described as “harmony with nature and the faithful observance of all her laws”.⁸⁷ Alberti’s treatment of *concininitas* marks the culmination of the theoretical speculation in *De re aedificatoria*, but it is founded in the concrete; the universality of nature and reason manifest themselves in the singularity of each situation, as stressed by the variability of taste.

Concininitas thus partakes of *numerus* and of structures of measure and harmony, while its ‘luminosity’ suggests both its ontological status and a link with the ‘brightening’ qualities of rhetorical figures.⁸⁸ The term seems carefully chosen to accommodate the various understandings which Alberti advances

84 For *concininitatis* as a quality of the arrangement of words (*collocatio, collocata verba*) which makes speech ornate and rhythmical (*numerosa*), see Cicero, *Orator* 24.81, 65.219: “Collocata autem verba habent ornatum si aliquid concinnitas efficient”. The arrangement of words is said to lie in “compositio, concinnitas, numerus”, *ibid.*, 60.20. On Pico and Barbaro, see Quirinus Breen, “Giovanni Pico della Mirandola on the Conflict of Philosophy and Rhetoric”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13, 1952, 384–412.

85 *Orator* 39.134: “ex collocatione verborum quae sumuntur quasi lumina magnum afferunt ornatum orationi. Sunt enim similia illis quae in amplo ornatu scaenae aut fori appellantur insignia, non quia sola ornent sed quod excellent”.

86 Cicero’s extensive discussions of *concininitas* in *Orator* and especially *Brutus* 287.3, 325.16, 327.5 relate it with *venustus*—it is *arguta*, bright and melodious, rather than *grava* or *severa*.

87 “deducit ad convenientiam conservationemque naturae”. See Smith, *Architecture*, 89.

88 At *Brutus* 83.2, *concininitas* is discussed in terms of light: “illam concinnitatem, quae verborum collocationem illuminat eis luminibus quae Graeci quasi aliquos gestus orationis σχήματα appellant”, “That *concininitas* which brightens a group of words with the lights that the Greeks call σχήματα, gestures as it were of speech”.

of architecture: formal, numerical, ethical and rhetorical, and to illuminate the relations between them. *Concinnitas* recalls the various interpretations of ornament as 'light'—as informing emanation, as the radiance which illuminates the perfection of a thing and the 'subsidiary' light associated with the appropriate. As we saw in discussion of hexaemeral literature, the object of theoretic contemplation can also be the appropriate.

Alberti's discussion of *concinnitas* appears to offer the bridge between universal reason and *ornamentum*. Architecture can be discussed as it creates beauty through the design of measured, harmonious forms or it can be regarded as the adorning of civic life. This raises a final point, which returns us to Alberti's body/house/city analogy. The organic concept of form in Alberti, with its functional character and the conception of the city as the totality of human activities, leads to an over-determined account of architectural settings. We see this in the way that Alberti envisages every detail in a context as predetermining and structuring the activity in the space, down to mosaic labyrinths in flooring to serve as educational play aids.⁸⁹

This totalising approach lessens the element of potentiality in the setting as it scripts responses. The city which emerges from *De re aed.*, with its carefully balanced spheres of activity, has a peculiarly reflective and memorial character. Its characteristic monuments are not so much its chastening temples or places of *negotium* as its commemorative sepulchres, columns and triumphal arches.⁹⁰ All this studious, literary meaning colours the emphasis on the city as a place of *praxis* and suggests that the virtuous acts performed within settings that form the praise of the city may themselves also have the character of imitation, and take on a commemorative, ceremonial quality. If Bruni's stress on *convenientia* turned the city into an artwork, here activity within the city may develop a conscious, predetermined, theatrical character.

Alberti divides spectacle into active and contemplative, corresponding to *negotium* and *otium* (*De re aed.* VIII.7). These continuities are underpinned by the constant city/house analogy, resulting in the penetration of spectacle into the house, where palestra, ambulatoria and circus have their equivalents in porticos, loggias, courtyard and open spaces for horse racing and facade imitated

89 *De re aed.* IX.4.

90 Alberti declares that while worshippers should not be distracted by sensual attractions, the temple should be adorned so that "nothing more decorous could ever be devised", the wall painted with uplifting inscriptions and the floors patterned with "geometric and musical shapes and lines" so that "the mind may receive stimuli from every side" (*De re aed.*, VII.10).

in the *frons scaenae* of the theatre.⁹¹ The mirroring of city and house or palace appears later in the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino, evoked as a city of virtue by Castiglione or in Raphael's design for Villa Madama, with its sequence of theatre spaces and monumental settings for 'active' and 'contemplative' *otium*. Perspective provided a tool to take this predetermined theatricality to a further point of schematisation, as provided by Alberti himself in *De pictura*. The development would not have been so consequential had the ground not been prepared by the evolution of *praxis* into artifice. In Alberti, this was not only a consequence of reliance on the rhetorical tradition, but results from interweaving a rational and organic aesthetics, in which the beauty of bodies is predicated on their functionality, with an ethical conception of the settings of *praxis*.

Theatre, City and the Decorated Room

The continuity of theatre settings in *De re aed.* formed the subject of a treatise entitled *Spectacula*, by Pellegrino Prisciani, historian, antiquarian, cartographer and astrologer to the Estense court in Ferrara where Alberti earlier sojourned.⁹² Prisciani's treatise discussed spectacle buildings but also capitals, porticos, piazzas, arches and the xystus, which provides recreation for mind and body; he saw that in Alberti theatre extends from private recreation through spectacle buildings to commemorative memorials.⁹³

Prisciani's treatment of theatre was indebted to Niccolò Perotti's *Cornu copiae* (1489), an exhaustive glossary of Martial's *Liber Spectaculis*.⁹⁴ Perotti speaks of theatre's origin in sacrifices to rustic gods and the derivation of

91 Spaces for play also appear within the public quarters of the house, like the portico where children of clients may amuse themselves while their fathers are waiting.

92 *Spectacula*, ed. Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1992). *Spectacula* is dated 1486–1501; see *ibid.*, 13; Giulia Torello Hill, "Gli *Spectacula* di Pellegrino Prisciani e il revival del teatro classico a Ferrara", *Engramma: la tradizione classica nella memoria occidentale* 90 (May–June 2011), www.engramma.it/eOS/index.php?id_articolo=580, accessed 30 July 2012.

93 Prisciani calls the xystus and ambulatoria "una altra facta de spectaculo" (*ibid.*, 59). Cf. Pontano, *De splendore* 5, who describes theatrical equipment, props for pomps and ceremonies as required in a splendid palace. Composed before 1493 (printed 1498) *De splendore* discusses villas and gardens under the class of *splendor*, pertaining to decoration, banquets and domestic objects, rather than magnificence, pertaining to public works. See Pontano, *Il libro delle virtù sociali*. Edited by Francesco Tateo. Rome: Bulzoni, 1999.

94 See Chapter 5.

theatron from *theōmai* as an assertion of its visual character.⁹⁵ The theatre is an urban spectacle (*urbanum spectaculum*) which allowed spectators to view things at a distance without obstruction. Perotti's comments reappear in Prisciani and Cesariano, the Vitruvius commentator who pays particular attention to *perspectiva*.⁹⁶ Cesariano calls "Theatrum, quasi dei atrium: vel potius ut aliqui voluerunt απο το θεωμαι, quod latine dicit video", thus punning, or alluding to theatre's ancient links with contemplation through its root in *theōmai*, related to *theōrein*, to *theōria*, and—according to some—to *theos*.⁹⁷ He stresses that the moral lesson provided by theatre used sight as the chief instrument of knowledge:

In these theatres, beyond the delights for the soul and the intellect, one could understand things by means of vision, in contemplation of the infinite variety of human artifice.⁹⁸

Perotti's discussion of the shift from agrarian cults to the Athenians' *spectacolo urbano*, the theatre or viewing-place (*visorio*), is repeated by Prisciani in

95 Perotti, *Cornu copiae* (Venice: Paganino de'Paganini, 1489), 29r: "απο τοῦ θεωμαι: quod est video: appellatum: latine dici spectaculum potest . . . nam cum agrorum cultores feriat diebus sacra diversis numinibus per pagos celebrarent: Athenienses hoc in urbanum spectaculum transtulerant theatrum graeco vocabulo appellantes: quod in eo conveniens turba a longe sine aliquo impedimento spectaret".

96 Cesariano, *De architectura*, 86r. Amongst the ornaments used in theatres, Cesariano mentions tapestries, Attalid vestments woven with gold and paintings.

97 Ibid., 75r. See Francesco Patrizi, *La Deca Istoriale* (1586), first part of *Della poetica*, ed. Danile Aguzzi-Barbagli (Florence: Istituto nazionale di studi sul rinascimento, 1969–71), I, 353, "il teatro da poi dal theorin e da theo prendesse il suo nome": "theatre from *theorein*, and from *theo* took its name". Patrizi's derivation of *theōria* from *theos* has antique precedents in Philodemus, *De musica* 13.23.8; Plutarch, *De musica* 27; Ammonius *Peri diaphorōn lexeōn*, ed. L. Valckenaer (Leipzig: J. Weigel, 1822), s.v. *theōros*, 68–69, who however distinguishes between *theōrein* as contemplation of the gods and *theasasthai* as concerning spectacle. Cf. Philo, *De gigantibus* VII.31, on disembodied souls who spend their days "in the theatre of the universe".

98 Ibid., 86r "Ma in epsi Theatri, ultra le cose che pascevano per le huarechie l'anima e lo intellecto, potesse capire per li sensi visivi contemplando le infinite varietate de li humani artificii". He speaks of parents using theatre to instruct their children. Cesariano also notes the similarities between the ritual elements in theatre, and religion; see *ibid.*, 75r. The instructive role of spectacle is noted by Feo Belcari, *Rappresentazione di Abramo ed Isaac* (1449), in *Le sacre rappresentazioni del Quattrocento*, ed. Luigi Banfi (Turin: UTET, 1997), 41.



FIGURE 4.1 *Francesco del Cossa, Frescoes of March, April and May, Sala dei Mesi, Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara, c. 1470.*

PHOTO: MARTINA BALLARIN, CATERINA GOTTARDI, LUCA PILOT, PAOLO VERNIER/LA RIVISTA DI ENGRAMMA (ISSN 1826-901X) [HTTP://WWW.ENGGRAMMA.IT/EOS2/INDEX.PHP?ID_ARTICOLO=1470](http://www.ENGGRAMMA.IT/EOS2/INDEX.PHP?ID_ARTICOLO=1470), LICENSED UNDER CC-BY 3.0.

Spectacula.⁹⁹ It is also portrayed in the frescoes of the Sala dei Mesi at Palazzo Schifanoia (c. 1470), decorated by artists including Francesco del Cossa, to Prisciani's inventions.¹⁰⁰

The frescoes exhibit the role of spectacle in portraying civic life as a whole, amenable to representation and show the relation between *theōria* as contemplation of the cosmic order and theatre as *spectacolo urbano*. The gods of the months in the upper tier of the decorations are shown as in the *Astronomica*

99 Prisciani, *Spectacula*, 37 (f. 18v), "sí como quelli primi agricoli in li giorni feriali celebravano soi sacrificii a diversi soi dèi per boschi, campagne et ville, cusí li atenesi prima, tal aggrete principio revolvendo in spectaculo urbano, lo chiamano theatro: cioè visorio". Prisciani notes the derivation of theatre from *θεωματα* in a marginal gloss. Cesariano resided in Ferrara following his departure from Milan c. 1490; see F. Ruffini, "Linee rette e intrichi: il Vitruvio di Cesariano e la Ferrara teatrale di Ercole I" in *La corte e lo spazio: Ferrara estense*, ed. G. Papageno and Amedeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982), 365–429.

100 A letter from Francesco del Cossa to Borso D'Este of 25 March 1470 shows Prisciani to be the inventor, drawing on Boccaccio's *Genealogia*; see Giovanni Carandente, *I Trionfi nel primo Rinascimento* (Moncalieri: ERI, 1963), 98; Hill, "Spectacula"; A. Rotondò, "Pellegrino Prisciani (1435 ca–1518)", *Rinascimento*, 11 (1960), 69–110.

of Manilius, in triumph with their 'children' and governing the scenes below of the good government of Borso D'Este, who dispenses justice under Minerva (whose 'children' include jurists), liberality under Venus.¹⁰¹ If theatre provides conditions of seeing, triumph provides a mode, as well as contents, of display.

Between these levels appears an intermediary band with unusual iconography representing the signs of the zodiac and the decans (three divisions of ten degrees in each of the zodiacal signs). This band emphasises the role of fate which separates the human from the divine, or (since the decans were associated with magic) with the means of drawing down or wedding the higher influences to the lower world.¹⁰² Within a circular astrological model, of the kind that Warburg claimed formed the basis for Prisciani's programme, the earth formed the centre, encircled by the stars (decans and planets) and then, as in Manilius, the Olympic deities.¹⁰³ The centre point is not just the lower tier of the frescoes but the room itself.

When we look out of the pilastered architectural frame which organises the decorations, we see first the court and city as a continuation of the Sala, then the band of the zodiac and decans against a dark sky, and above, the gods. The continuity is asserted conceptually by the astrological scheme and visually through spectacle.¹⁰⁴ The universal order made visible must be grasped

101 See Marco Folin, "Borso D'Este a Schifanoia. Il Salone dei Mesi come *speculum principis*", in *Il Palazzo Schifanoia a Ferrara* ed. Salvatore Settis (Modena: Panini, 2007), 9–50; Stefania Macioce, "Schifanoia e il cerimoniale: il trionfo del 'preux chevalier' Borso D'Este", in *Atlante di Schifanoia*, ed. Ranieri Varese (Modena: Panini, 1989), 65–84; Ludovico Zorzi, *Il teatro e la città: saggi sulla scena italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), Chapter 1, "Ferrara: il sipario ducale"; M. Villoresi, *Da Guarino a Boiardo. La cultura teatrale a Ferrara nel Quattrocento*, (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994); T. Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara: Ercole d'Este, 1471–1505 and the Invention of a Ducal Capital*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 234–76, 332–35; Roberto Longhi, *Officina ferrarese* (Florence: Sansoni, 1956); Elena Povoledo, "La sala teatrale in Ferrara da Pellegrino Prisciano a Ludovico Ariosto", in *Bollettino del centro internazionale d'architettura Andrea Palladio*, 16, (1974), 105–38. The unicorn (a device of Borso D'Este) with its horn in the water in the Minerva fresco alludes to the draining of the Ferrara marches.

102 On the magical associations of the decans, see Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

103 Aby Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara" (1912), trans. in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. David Britt, introduction by Kurt Foster (Los Angeles: Getty Institute, 1999), 563–91. Warburg adduces the *Planisphaerium Bianchini* as a model.

104 Cf. Ficino, *De vita* III.19, who recommends the creation of a small vaulted room "deep within your house", preferably a bedroom, decorated with a "figure of the universe".

in relation to the Sala as a setting for the ceremonies of the Estense court.¹⁰⁵ If triumph is the means by which we can ascend from the city to the heavens, it makes their relationship *visible*. As in Perotti's and Prisciani's accounts of the-atre, we see a progression from the "agricoli" at their labours to the "spectacolo urbano" of the Estense court, all presented within the Sala as "visorio".

The iconography enters the Sala through and as *visorio*; as a room for court ceremonial it would have been fulfilled by the ritual activities of government depicted in the decorations. The decorations conversely represent as a background (seen through the fictive loggia) the whole context of meaning which locates a particular ceremony that takes place within the room. If the Sala can be read as implied circle (zodiac and projected astrological chart), it resembles contemporary images of antique theatres or arenas as circular spaces enclosed by a colonnade, like the joust in a pavilion depicted in Marcanova's *Collectio antiquitatum* 11r.¹⁰⁶ The circuit of the astronomical gods in their chariots also recalls the planetary allegory of the ancient circus, as recounted by Alberti.¹⁰⁷

The framing ornamental arch, ubiquitous in Renaissance decoration and architecture as triumphal arch, nymphaeum, arcade, loggia, monument, etc., is crucial to the scenic illusion. Unlike other frames like the throne, chariot or aureole which may appear as emanations of a figure's energy, the arch discloses something other than itself—the Albertian perspectival "view through a window".¹⁰⁸ If the scenographic illusion establishes the visual relationships, the commemorative, celebratory ornament establishes the mode of reading.

We started the chapter with two accounts of the city as a complete ethical topography and have ended with reliance on theatre to provide such representations, concentrated in the scenographic room as *visorio*. The way that theatre

105 At the wedding procession of Eleonora of Aragon in 1473, triumphal cars representing the planets stood at the seven crossroads traversed by the *cortège*; see Povoledo, "Sala teatrale", 107.

106 See Chapter 9 for bibliographic details. Representations of circular theatres, taking the Colosseum as their prototype, appear in the frontispiece of a Venetian edition of Terence (1497), in the drawings of Francesco di Giorgio Martini of a "teatro antico", and Cesariano's Vitruvius, which depicts the theatre as Colosseum without and semicircular within.

107 See Alberti *De re aed.*, VIII.7; sources in Tertullian, *De spectaculis* 9; Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 1.314–333; Cassiodorus, *Variae* III.51.4–10. Later Renaissance discussions of circus as a cosmic allegory include Barbaro, *Dieci libri*, v.11, 223; Ligorio, *Libro . . . delle antichità di Roma* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1553), 12r–13r; Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 33. In Cicero's *De legibus* and Onofrio Panvinio's *De ludis circensibus* 1.2 (posth. publ. 1600), the circus and the theatre are linked as two forms of *ludi*: *ludi circensium* and *ludi scenicorum*. Panvinio notes the gladiatorial spectacles are not *ludi* but *munera*.

108 For analysis of the transition between the illusionist strata, see Sandström, *Levels*.

and perspective communicated over various conceptual and representational levels appears in Ferrara's importance in the development of Renaissance drama, in surveying (Prisciani's 1498 city map) and in urban planning, in the *addizione* of Biagio Rossetti, seen as the first application of modern town planning.¹⁰⁹ It is in Ferrara that the term "perspettiva" is first used of a stage set, used of the scenography of Pellegrino da Udine for the 1508 production of Ariosto's *Cassaria*.

Theatre has both a ritual and a dialogic element; the expressive possibilities of the latter were described by rhetoric. The interaction of rhetoric and perspective which forms an armature to Renaissance painting shows the attempt at plausible representation of a total environment, with profound implications for ornament.¹¹⁰ We shall explore these through Humanist literature and Renaissance art treatises in the coming chapters; here we have seen the reliance on theatre in attempts to describe civic culture as a conceptual and urban totality which is not an abstraction.

109 See Zorzi, "Ferrara: il sipario ducale"; Povoledo, "La sala teatrale a Ferrara"; *Teatro del Quattrocento. Le corti padane*, ed. A. Tissoni Benvenuti and M. Mussini Sacchi (Turin: UTET, 1983); Ruffini, "Linee rette"; Cesare Molinari, "Il teatro nella tradizione vitruviana: da Leon Battista Alberti a Daniele Barbaro", *Biblioteca Teatrale*, 1 (1971), 30–46; Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, *Li Due Orfei: da Poliziano a Monteverdi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969). Tasso's *Aminta* (1573), composed for a court festival, plays with the mirroring of city-court and garden scene—see especially Scene 11.565–652. On the *addizione*, see Bruno Zevi, *Biagio Rossetti architetto ferrarese, il primo urbanista moderno europeo*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1960); idem, *Saper vedere l'urbanistica, Ferrara di Biagio Rossetti, la prima città moderna europea* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971). Zorzi, "Ferrara", 7ff, 92, compared the alternation of urban streets and restful gardens of Rossetti's *addizione* to the topography of *Orlando Furioso*.

110 On the parity of drama and painting, see Comanini, *Il Figino ovvero del fine della pittura* (1591) repr. TA III, 344–45.

Garland and Mosaic in Literary Humanism

Triumph and Laureation

The coming chapters will consider the ‘ornament of antiquity’—by this meaning what is ‘ornamental’ about antiquity—how it can valorise or illustrate praise. We look first at the association of poetry and praise, which develops from medieval and late antique poetry to the triumphal themes prominent in Humanist poetics.¹ The triumph which promises the “eternity” of fame and the recovery of the past signals the association of ornament with temporality which we noted in Bruni. This is explored through Petrarch’s use of the laurel. We then consider the use of *ornatus mundi* topoi by fifteenth century Humanists and see how they promoted an increasingly rhetorical understanding of ornament, with its basis in universal ordering treated in conventional terms. As the volume of ancient texts grows and questions about their imitation dominate poetics, ornament becomes increasingly focused on the stylistic surface at the expense of the profound relation between *involucrum* and doctrinal or ‘mysterious’ content. In Petrarch, the *sermo ornatus* of poetry is the allegory that creates wonders but also the style founded on imitation and the ‘absorption’ of classical sources.² This appears in Humanist discussions of *varietas*.

Petrarch and Triumph

The centrality of praise and fame to poetry appears in the interest in poetic coronation or laureation in Trecento poets.³ Boccaccio spoke of poetry as granting immortal fame and his *Trattatello in laude di Dante* opens with the forms of honour bestowed by the ancients: deification, marble statue, great

1 See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 155 ff. et passim; O.B. Hardison, *The Enduring Monument: a Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1973), 32–36, on Fulgentius’ and Donatus’ expositions of *Aeneid* as epideictic; Averroes’ paraphrase of *Poetics* on poetry as epideictic and its history; Benvenuto da Imola’s epideictic reading of the *Divine Comedy*.

2 For Petrarch’s discussions of imitation using the bee topos and the family resemblances, see *Familiares* 1.8; XXIII.19.

3 See Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante* in *Opere in versi*, Corbaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante, Prose latine, epistole*, ed. Pier Giorgio Ricci (Ricciardi: Milan, 1965), 622, on poetic coronation, supposedly established by Solon.

tombs, triumphal arch, laurel crown.⁴ The theme of poetic coronation also leads Boccaccio into a history of poetry.⁵ The *Raccolta aragonese*, the anthology of Tuscan poetry attributed to Poliziano and Lorenzo de' Medici, opens with a similar *laus* of the Olympic Games, the Roman triumph and related "mirabilissimi ornamenti"—triumphal car and arch, marble trophies, theatres, statues, palms, coronae, funeral orations which, like poetry, celebrate fame and 'praise'.⁶

Dante aspired to coronation by Apollo in *Paradiso* 1.13–15 and echoed Statius on the twin laurels of poet and emperor which flourish in rivalry.⁷ He opens *Paradiso* xxv.1–9 with his longing to be crowned in the Baptistry of Florence.⁸ Giovanni del Virgilio proposed crowning Dante in Bologna if he would write in Latin; Antonio Pucci described the poet wearing the laurel crown at his funeral in 1321.⁹

The Trecento poetic coronations start with that of Albertino Mussato in 1315 by the bishop and rector of the University of Padua, for his *Ecerinis*, a tragedy based on Seneca, on the fame and fall of Ezzelino da Romano.¹⁰ The putative

4 Ibid., 565. On poetic immortality, see Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri xiv*.4, ed. Vincenzo Romano (Bari: Laterza, 1951), 11, 689: "Nam ut liquido constat, fere immortalita sunt, cum nomine componentis carmina poetarum".

5 *Trattatello*, 613 ff.

6 *Raccolta aragonese*, in *Prosatori volgari del Quattrocento* ed. Claudio Varese (Turin: UTET, 1955), 985.

7 *Paradiso* 1.25–30, "per trionfare o Cesare o poeta"; Statius, *Achilleid* 1.15–16 "cui geminae florent vatunquē ducumquē/ certatim laurus". Cf. *Thebiad*, 1.32–33 on the poet wearing laurel. In *Purg.* xxxii Dante shows the car of the church, initially likened to the chariot of Elijah, transformed into the beast which carries the Babylonian whore. Antonio Pinelli, "Feste e trionfi: continuità e metamorfosi di un tema", in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana* 11, 293–4, discusses the car's derivation from the *quadriga Christi* in which the Shulamite sits in the commentary on the Cantic of Honorius of Autun, (PL 172, cols 454–455). Beatrice is thrice called to the chariot with the words "Veni, sponsa, de Libano", based on the invocation of the Shulamite in Cantic 4.8.

8 Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, 612, notes Dante's longing for a Florentine laureation.

9 For Dante's correspondence with del Virgilio on the proposed coronation, see Trapp, "Owl's Ivy", 238; Ernest Wilkins, "The Coronation of Petrarch" in *The Making of the 'Canzoniere' and other studies* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1951), 9–69, 23. Posthumous Florentine laureations were awarded to Bruni and Carlo Marsuppini, whose tombs face each other in Santa Croce. The tomb typology shared in the later Quattrocento and early Cinquecento by rulers, captains and Humanists also evokes the triumph as prize of generals and poets.

10 Trapp, "Owl's Ivy", 237, notes the triumphal character of the festival; Wilkins, "Coronation", 21–23, sees the elements of the academic *conventus* in Mussato's laureation. On Mussato

classical origin of the ceremony was Domitian's institution of the Capitoline Games, described in Suetonius, *Domitian* IV.4, who notes performances in Greek and Latin and musical competitions alongside riding, races and gymnastic contests.¹¹

Mussato's coronation was described as a *pompa*; Boccaccio called Petrarch's coronation in 1341 a triumph.¹² Petrarch's laureation, for which the University of Paris competed with Rome, involved a celebration of the Capitol.¹³ Petrarch's diploma or *privilegium* presented poetry as an *officium poetae*, comparable with the duties of a legislator or *imperator*. His coronation discourse (*Collatio*) treated the laurel crown of caesars and poets and the laurel as allegory.¹⁴ A sonnet to Rome was accepted, and the poet then visited the Vatican where he hung his wreath before the shrine of St Peter. The privileges endowed on Petrarch at his coronation included the right to wear a poetic habit, to wear a crown of laurel, ivy or myrtle and to teach, dispute, interpret or compose all kinds of literature in all places.¹⁵

Triumphal and poetic symbols are mixed—as Petrarch himself mixed them in the garland—in a ceremony which identifies the poet with Rome and its renovation.¹⁶ In Boccaccio's account in the letter to Pizzinga, the ascent of

as a Humanist, defender of poetry and composer of priapic verses, see Angelo Mazzocco, "Petrarch: Founder of Italian Humanism?" in *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 217, 225–26; Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics*, 80–90; Curtius, *European Literature*, 220.

11 See also Censorius, *De die natali liber* 18.4–5.

12 For documents concerning Petrarch's laureation, see Wilkins, "Coronation". On Boccaccio's discussion, in a letter of 1372 to Jacopo Pizzinga, see Mazzocco, "Petrarch", 222.

13 See *Rerum Familiarum Libri* IV.4 on Petrarch's two laureation invitations.

14 For the *Collatio*, rediscovered in 1874, see Carlo Godi, La 'Collatio Laureationis del Petrarca', *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 13 (1970), 1–28; Petrarch, *Opere Latine*, ed. A. Bufano, B. Aracri and C. Reggiani (Turin: UTET, 1975), II, 1256–83; Ernest Wilkins, *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch*, (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1955), 300–13; idem, "Coronation", 35–45; Kantorowicz, "Sovereignty", 277. Petrarch describes his laureation ceremony in *Epystole metriche* 2.1, "Ad Johannem Barrilem"; *Fam.* IV.4, IV.6–IV.8, XIII.7; *Rerum Senilium Libri* XVII.2; *Carmen Bucolicum* 3.

15 See Trapp, "Owl's Ivy", 243–46, for the association of ivy with the learned poet, as it develops from Landino's gloss on Horace I.1.29–30. On Petrarch's knowledge of the Capitoline games, where the victor was crowned with oak, see *ibid.*, 234, 236; Wilkins, "Coronation", 16, on Juvenal's reference to the Capitoline oak garland (*Satires*, 6.387–88). Petrarch discusses ivy, myrtle and laurel, "tam cesarea quam poetica", in *Collatio* 11 and *Epystole metriche* 2.10, ll.20–21.

16 At *Collatio* 5.4–7 the renovation of the poetic contest on the Capitol is said to reveal Parnassus overgrown and deserted; at 6.1–2 Petrarch links his choice of Rome for

Parnassus and the long abandoned Capitol are identified, and Petrarch triumphant on the Capitol shows the Romans (*quiritibus*) a sight “ab annis forsan mille vel amplius invisum”.¹⁷ A forged description of the laureation by ‘Sennuccio Fiorentino’ which circulated from 1549, describes a mitred Petrarch, shod with one *cothurnus* and one *soccus*, driving through flower-strewn streets in a triumphal car with laurel, ivy and myrtle, with images of the gods and a gold cloth figuring Parnassus.¹⁸ Petrarch’s *Collatio*—like *Africa* IX—reiterated the Statian theme of the laurel as the ornament of fame, due to poets and emperors.¹⁹ Emperors seek glory through the body, poets through the soul or spirit; as body and soul need one another in life, so poets and rulers require each other, and their shared ornament marks their joint purpose.²⁰ The laurel confers immortality, through art which bestows fame on the poet and those praised. In Petrarch’s *Africa*, Scipio and Ennius appear together, both crowned with laurel.²¹ The poetic triumph becomes a celebratory display of its artificer as well as its object—and this celebration is linked to the theme of Rome regenerated.²² Poetic coronations thus continued to feature prominently in the *renovatio* of Rome, such as the performances of Pomponio Leto’s Roman academy.²³

laureation, despite the fame of the University of Paris, with his hopes for its renovation. Wilkins, “Coronation”, 65, sees Petrarch’s coronation as a classicizing adaptation of a medieval graduation ceremony. For earlier recreations of the Roman triumph, see the later thirteenth century *Liber ystoriarum romanorum*, Hamburg, Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, ms 151, f.90v, which shows the triumph of Caesar in antique style armour, crowned by a Nike, riding in a quadriga, surrounded by soldiers carrying spoils towards a monumental gate.

17 Mazzocco, “Petrarch”, 222.

18 Trapp, “Owl’s Ivy”, 254.

19 Cf. *Africa* IX.108–23, 216 ff., on the laurel shared by the poet and the *imperator*. Petrarch annotated Servius’ commentary on *Eclogues* VIII.13 on the laurel as the garland of victors, ivy as the garland of poets, with a statement on poets’ entitlement to the laurel, alluding to Statius, *Achilleid* 1.15–16; see Trapp, “Owl’s Ivy”, 237; Wilkins, “Coronation”, 18.

20 *Collatio* 11.1, 11.4–6. At *Collatio* 11.13–15 Petrarch attributes to the laurel the power to bestow prophetic dreams to those who sleep in its shade. *Collatio* 10 discusses poetic fame.

21 *Africa* IX.388–403.

22 In the *Collatio* 2.6–7 Petrarch touches the theme of the divinely inspired poet, citing Cicero, *Pro Archia* 8.18.

23 On the laureations and poetry contests organised by Leto’s academy, see Phyllis Pray Bober, “The Legacy of Pomponius Laetus”, in *Roma nella svolta tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, ed. Stefano Colonna (Rome: De Luca, 2004), 459; on medieval poetry contests and post-Petrarchan coronations, including that of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini in 1442, see Trapp, “The Poet Laureate: Rome, *Renovatio* and *Translatio Imperii*”, in *Rome in the Renaissance*:

Petrarch develops the association between poetic fame and classical triumph in his writings.²⁴ The *Triumphs* exploit the allegorical use of triumph in Latin lyric and psychomachia alongside its use as a showcase for classical erudition.²⁵ The fleeting nature of victory and success, central to accounts of ancient triumphs, is stressed in Petrarch's agonic cycle, with each triumph vanquishing the former and in the phantasmal nature of the pageants as dream visions.²⁶ With its providential narrative, its progression from carnal to divine love and its use of *terza rima*, the *Triumphs* suggest comparison with the *Divina commedia*.²⁷ Petrarch however replaces spirits whose place in the after-life illuminates the theological scheme with exemplary figures from antiquity whose stories illustrate a topic.²⁸ By contrast with Dante, the work has a narrower literary and ethical vision, and its spiritual content is focussed on human

The City and the Myth ed. P.A. Ramsey (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), 93–130. Tasso died on the eve of his Roman coronation, in April 1595.

- 24 Amongst Petrarch's other treatments of triumph see *Fam.* 11.9.18; 4.5; 4.6; 4.9; 11.1; 13.7. For Petrarch's final reference to his laureation, see *Seniles* XVII.2, to Boccaccio, where he calls the garland a crown of bitter envy and youthful audacity.
- 25 On the unfinished state of the *Triumphs* at Petrarch's death in 1374 and the discussions concerning the ordering of the text and its chapters, see Zygmunt Barański, "A Provisional Definition of Petrarch's *Triumphs*" in *Petrarch's Triumphs. Allegory and Spectacle*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare Iannucci (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1990), 63–83. Ovid's *Amores* 1.2 has a triumph of Cupid accompanied by personifications; Propertius *Elegies* 1.1 shows the lover vanquished and his head trampled by Cupid. For Petrarch's relation to the Latin elegists, see Richard Monti, "Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Ovid and Vergil", in *Petrarch's Triumphs*, 11–32; Berthold Ullman, "Petrarch's Favourite Books" and "Petrarch's Acquaintance with Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius", both in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 2nd ed., (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1973). Barański, "Provisional Definition", 74, notes that Petrarch integrates the themes of *Africa* into the *Triumphs*.
- 26 The *Triumphs* present an alternative to vernacular dream-vision allegory; for Petrarch's poor opinion of the *Roman de la Rose*, see *Epyst. Metr.* 111.30, in *Opera Omnia* 111 (Basel, Henricopetrus 1554), 1371. In Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, deeply influenced by Petrarch, the triumph becomes a progressive erasure of the things which it represents.
- 27 A triumph also appears in Fazio degli Uberti's encyclopaedic *terza rima* poem *Dittamondo* 11.3 (1346–67).
- 28 Gian Carlo Alessio, "The 'lectura' of the *Triumphs* in the Fifteenth Century", in *Petrarch's Triumphs*, 274, quotes a commentary on the *Triumphus mortis*, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 11536 which describes it as a *summa* of the three styles—low or *miserabilis* in description of Laura's death, middle or *suavissima* in description of love's delight and *tragice* in description of time's universal destruction and eternity.

perception of time and salvation.²⁹ This temporal character was the object of early commentary, which focussed on the *Triumph* as allegories for states of life.³⁰

Despite their sparse visual detail, Petrarch's *Triumph* had immense impact on Renaissance art and spectacle, discussed below.³¹ He also showed how triumph can work as a structure or mode and can be used to accommodate allegory, historical or antiquarian detail and religious themes. The *Triumph* show the triumph's possibility to celebrate the worldly or historical and its transience in the face of divine splendour. Petrarch shows that as structure, the triumph offers cyclicity; as mode, it involves antiquarianism, *copia*, lavish decorative detail and theatricality.³² He also points to the fantastical character of the triumph, contained within the imaginative faculties—memory, imaginative invention and the dream vision, suggestive of prophetic revelation, as its highest capability. The movement from ethical allegory, peopled with antique exemplars, to providential fable contrasts with the centrality of nature in medieval philosophical allegory.

Nymph and Laurel

The topical use of the garland to designate the link between love lyrics, set in a pleasant place, and triumphal themes is already handled with sophistication by Propertius.³³ Petrarch however typifies these links into a circle of metaphors and centres them on the figure of Laura, in whom the allegories

29 The device of dialogue with spirits which Petrarch shares with Virgil and Dante is noted in Alessandro Vellutello's Petrarch commentary, *Il Petrarca* (Venice: Govann'Antonio di Nicolini, 1541), 239r.

30 The Quattrocento commentaries, such as that of Bernardo Illicino, printed 1475, the commentary of Iacopo Bracciolini printed in Rome, 1475 and the manuscript commentary in the Archiginnasio, Bologna, ms. A 363, regard the triumphs as an allegory of human life, aligning them with the ages of man and the movement from active to contemplative life, culminating in the eternal contemplation of God. See Alessio for quotations, "Lectura", 271–72. See also Bembo's introduction to his *Triumph* annotations, in *Il Petrarca* (Lyon: Roville, 1558) 465–67.

31 Barański, "Provisional Definition", 67, asserts that for Petrarch "the triumph . . . was a textual construct".

32 The circular character was associated with the "chain" effect of the *terza rima*; Bembo comments on this in his annotations (*Petrarca*, 468).

33 For Petrarch's discovery of Propertius' *Elegies* on a visit to Paris in 1333, see Nicholas Mann, *Petrarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 12; Ullman, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 113–33, 177–96.

or Muses of fable are replaced by a nymph-like figure.³⁴ Laura, the ornament of beauty and virtue on earth is celebrated in Petrarch's triumphal coronation with the laurels that are, metaphorically, Laura.³⁵ Laura is the praise of poetry and poetry is the praise of Laura. The laurel is the means and end of poetry, making the pursuit of poetic fame its central subject, although Petrarch affirms poetry's allegorical character, its use of veils and the work of interpretation which makes its fruit sweeter.³⁶

One striking aspect of Laura in the *Canzoniere* is her absence of *doctrina*; where the philosophical ladies of cosmological fable or Dante's Beatrice teach, Laura moves, transitively and intransitively, as fleeting, inspired, affective presence.³⁷ The movement of the *Canzoniere* is from Laura as 'living light' of nature to the praise and triumph of art.³⁸ Laura's lack of dialogue, her presentation as an image before the poet or retreating from him also gives her a phantasmal character. The 'veils' of metaphor mingle with other kinds of surface images—the phantasms seen in water or in dream.³⁹ Petrarch advances the alignment between allegorical poetry and poetic images endlessly varied and transformed in the imagination. He uses figures to depict a cycle of

34 See Aldo Bernardo, *Petrarch, Laura and the Triumphs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 1–25; Wilkins, *Making of the 'Canzoniere'*; J.B. Trapp, "Petrarch's Laura: The Portrait of an Imaginary Beloved", *JWCI* 64 (2001), 55–192.

35 For Laura and triumph, see *Secretum* dialogue 3; *Rime*, sonnets 225, ll.9–12; 313, ll. 9–11; 359, ll. 50–51, where the dead Laura offers Petrarch the laurel in a dream; *Bucolicum Carmen* 3 and 10, on the translation of the laurel to heaven. The illumination painted by the Master of the *Vitae imperatorum* in Biblioteca Vaticana, ms. Barb. lat. 3943 shows Petrarch crowned with the laurel garland by Laura, before a laurel. On the Laura-lauro equivocation, see Sara Sturm-Maddox, *Petrarch's Laurels* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

36 *Collatio* 9.4 quotes Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 1.2.24–5, on the imaginative liberty of poets who transform things via figurations, differentiated however from the inventions of liars (*mendacem*). Petrarch then quotes Macrobius on Homer's veil (*nube*) of poetic fiction, *In Somn. Scip.* 11.10.11. At 9.7–8 he praises allegorical poetry for the effort of interpretation it requires. Petrarch also quotes Lactantius in *Invectiva contra medicum* 1 and *Seniles* XII.2.

37 This non-didactic character is suggested by the alternative titles of the *Canzoniere*: *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* or *Rime sparse*. On Laura's similarities to Capella's Philologia, see however Bernardo, *Petrarch*, 170–83.

38 On Laura as the "light of nature", see *Canzoniere* 154. All translations from the *Canzoniere* are from *Rime sparse*, translated and edited Robert Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), unless otherwise specified.

39 See *Canzoniere* 129 and *Epyst. Metr.* 1.6 where the image of Laura appears in the rock, wood, or water, alluding to her association with her locus.

transformation whereby the earthly *involucrum*, which veils the idea of heavenly beauty, is represented by the veils of metaphor.⁴⁰ Laura's beauty has its paradigm as a heavenly 'idea' and its locus and metaphor in nature, the earthly veil by which it manifests itself.

Thus the poetic quest figured by pursuit of Laura is represented as a garland of metaphors, forming a cycle of transformations whose measure lies in its circularity and thus in its harmony, despite the agonies of metamorphosis to which the lover is subjected. If the laurel is Muse and wreath, it is also a locus—Laura sits in the shade of the *locus amoenus* which is herself and her ornament, “seder la donna nostra sopra l'erba et far de la sua braccia a se stessa ombra”.⁴¹ The *lauro-Laura* equivocation illuminates the relationship between figure and locus, as though place were a metaphoric extension of the figure.⁴² The *lauro* is described by Petrarch as a place of repose, the resting place won by glorious deeds, whose fragrant leaves signify the perfume of fame and glory.⁴³ This conflation between place and figure becomes central to the Petrarchan imitation promulgated by Bembo, and subsequent adherents of Petrarchism, such as Giulio Camillo, turn the figure-topos relation into a system of topical invention, discussed below.⁴⁴ The place created by motifs returns us to topical articulation: the locus of a figure appears as an aura or aureole but can be created topically, as the categories predicated of a subject (or appropriate to it), including place, can be invented from the subject. Lorenzo de' Medici in *Comento de'miei sonetti* identifies the locus of a love sonnet as paradise, since the desirable qualities of the lady create a “place”.⁴⁵

Petrarch's metaphoric circuits between splendour, vivifying inspiration, muse, triumph and place draw together various conceptions of ornament.

40 In *Contra medicum* I, Petrarch describes the poet adorning the truth of things with beautiful veils “veritatem rerum pulchris velaminibus adornare”, *Opera* II (Basel: Henricopetrus, 1554), 1205.

41 *Canz.* 34, “our lady seated on the grass and making with her arms shade for herself”, cf. *Canz.* 30 “(il) duro lauro ch' à i rami di diamante et d'or le chiome”, “the hard laurel which has branches of diamond and hair of gold”. The idyllic landscape as the place of poetry appears in *Contra medicum* IV.198 and in Boccaccio, *Genealogie* XIV.4.

42 For the play on *lauro*, *l'auro* and *l'aura*, the inspiring breeze, see *Canz.* 246 “L'aura che 'l verde lauro et l'aureo crine”; *Canz.* 197, “L'aura celeste che 'n quell verde lauro/ spira”.

43 *Collatio* 11.6–8.

44 See the identification of lady and topos in Bembo's *Gli Asolani* 11.22, 23, 29; 111.8, 9, 10; the work is set in the gardens of the palace of the Queen of Cyprus.

45 Commentary on Sonnet 6 in Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento de'miei sonetti* ed. Tiziano Zanato (Florence: Olschki, 1991), 184. On dating of the work (final version 1491), see *ibid.*, 123–29.

Figurative disclosure of the place where a narrative happens comes together with the figuration of the 'praise' of something as an illuminating aureole, frame or crown. The splendour of Laura's beauty figures virtue as the ornament of the soul. The garland as plant refers to place but is also crown, the seat is a kind of aureole as well as a place. Petrarch shows the elasticity of place thus understood, as the locus grows with the multiplication of metaphors to a great tree or a wood: "Solo d'un lauro tal selva verdeggia" (*Canz.* 107); "l gran lauro fu picciola verga" (*Canz.* 187). At *Canz.* 127 the white and gold of Laura's beauty stretches beyond the lyric grove to sunlit and snow-covered mountains at the horizon and contracts to the delicacy of meadow flowers stirred by the breeze, which is, again, inspiring Laura ("l'aura inanzi a cui mia vita fugge", *Canz.* 133).

As laurel, Laura represents the effulgence of praise and fame; as nymph, she is the "the living light in which nature sees herself", a line in which allusions to emanation and phantasm are mixed. Petrarch calls Laura "fior de l'altre belle stando in se stessa à la sua luce sparta" (*Canz.* 127)—she contains and unites the beauty scattered in other things, and diffuses it in her 'light'.⁴⁶ As exemplar, Laura's beauty is asserted to derive from the transcendent forms.⁴⁷ The flowers which spring up in Laura's steps (*Canz.* 165) show her as "nature's light", whose virtues emanate as flowers and actualise the vital forces ('virtues') of nature.⁴⁸

Petrarch's lyrics construct poetry from the topoi for literary ornament in Hellenistic and Roman rhetoric. They blend the ornament associated with stylistic registers; the grace of simple style (see Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Lysias), the decorative charm of middle style and triumphal themes associated with grand manner. They exemplify the rhetorical description of middle style as using elements of higher and lower style, as well as its own distinct features. As we saw, such style was associated amongst other things with epideictic. Petrarchan lyrics are to this degree meta-texts; poems about poetry

46 "the flower of other beauties, remaining in herself, has scattered her light".

47 See *Canz.* 159: "In qual parte del Ciel, in quale Idea/era l'essempio onde Natura tolse/quel bel viso leggiadro in ch'ella volse/mostrar qua già quanto lassù potea?": "In what part of Heaven, in what Idea was the pattern from/which Nature copied that lovely face, in which she has shown/down here what she is capable of doing up there?" *Canz.* 159 paragon's Laura's beauty to other figures associated with their locus, the "ninfa in fonti" and the "dea in selve".

48 "Come 'l candido pie' per l'erba fresca/i dolci passi onestamente move,/vertù che 'ntorno i fiori apra et rinove/de le tenere piante sue par che esca". Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum naturae* 1.7–8 on the earth blossoming for *alma Venus*; Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae*, Prose 2, 20–21, on the earth which blossoms at the coming of Nature.

and ornament as its mode and end.⁴⁹ Petrarch also affirms the association of the garland with the nymph, an association which goes back to Greek lyric and the *Greek Anthology*, to Roman lyric and elegy. In Petrarch the *ninfa* becomes a figure for movement, an association later developed in visual art, as evinced by Alberti's comments on flowing hair or drapery and the influence of rediscovered Neo-Attic maenad reliefs.⁵⁰ As with Neo-Attic reliefs, we see figures become ornamental motifs, with the result that ornament can depict agency; this should also recall Quintilian's association of ornament with mode.

The background of poetic fable to Petrarchan lyrics is suggested by the ease with which they lent themselves to allegory in Lorenzo de' Medici's *Comento*. The locus of the beloved is expounded so as to show it possesses the 'ornaments' of creation and the lady is associated with flowers and stars.⁵¹ The lady's 'virtue' makes flowers blossom from the earth which are her 'praises' and her 'excellences'.⁵² However, as the lady is an absent (fugitive or deceased) object of desire, the locus is the place where the vestiges and signs of the departed beloved are beheld.⁵³ The *ornatus mundi* shifts from an object of contemplation and delight into a place of erotic fantasy; in the locus, the lover memorises the attributes of the lady.⁵⁴ Lorenzo indeed compares the beatitude of

49 This refers to the love lyrics; the civic or political theme of the renovation of Italy is linked to 'Laura' through the triumph.

50 Alberti, *De pictura* ed. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon, 1972), II.45. On the Quattrocento *ninfa* figure and its fascination see Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 14–21.

51 See *Canz.* 70, where Laura is discussed with "Tutte le cose, di che'l mondo è adorno"; Lorenzo, *Comento*, 237–38, where flowers blossom in the lady's steps, the air is made clearer and more "inlustre" where she passes, and her path likened to the Milky Way.

52 See *Comento*, 237, 296–300, on the lady as Flora (Sonnet 33); 276, 306, on her looks, words, praises and excellences as like flowers. She is said to have died in spring which she makes germinate (*ibid.*, 160).

53 *Ibid.*, 237 on the lover who searches the place for the lady and makes it a memory place: "Tornai adunque non solamente in questo luogo, ma ancora mi reducevo in esso a memoria e le parole e i modi suoi", "so I not only returned to this place but in it I even led myself in memory to it and her words and ways", trans. James Cook, *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent A Commentary on my Sonnets* (Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), 153. The discussion of vision and the reception of images appears also in Ficino's physiology in his *Symposium* commentary.

54 See *Comento*, 231–34 (commentary on Sonnet 17), on imaginative projection which makes us hear voices in ringing bells or water and see forms in the sky or the veins of rocks; the lover hears his lady's name in a murmuring waterfall and sees her image in the pool which held her reflection. On fantasy, locus and triumph cf. Sonnet 28, where the lady sleeps beneath an oak tree adorned like a Roman trophy. The spoils are her "amorous looks" which are 'despoiled' from her as she closes her eyes in sleep (*ibid.*, 275–76, 281).

contemplation to imagination which dwells on the beloved.⁵⁵ Lorenzo insists on their similar modes and effects, despite their different ends; the delight of dwelling imaginatively on objects which are not harmful owes its pleasure to its similarity to the greatest sweetness and perfect happiness of spiritual contemplation.⁵⁶ The locus adorned by nature moves within the poet's fantasy; the corollary of this is that the fantasy is claimed to form images worthy of contemplation.

One of the great mythological paintings of Lorenzo's age, Botticelli's *Primavera*, also shows Petrarchan topoi re-joined to philosophical fable, so that grace and movement enlivens allegory. Fig. 5.1 A cycle of ornamental images linked to lyric and sophisticated rhetoric—spring flowers, dance, Graces, Venus richly robed—regain allegorical depth as they are configured in a choric spectacle.⁵⁷

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- 55 Ibid., 250: “la dolcezza della immaginazione ha qualche similitudine con la vera beatitudine, cioè quella che consegue l'anima a cui è data la gloria eterna, la quale in altro modo non si fruisce che immaginando e contemplando la bontà divina”: “the sweetness of the imagination has some likeness to the true blessedness, that is that which pursues the soul to which eternal glory is given, which enjoys this blessedness in no other way than in imagining and contemplating divine goodness”, Cook, *Autobiography*, 171.
- 56 “although this [spiritual] contemplation may be quite different from human contemplation . . . nonetheless they have some similarity in their mode”, *ibid.*, “benché questa contemplazione sia differente assai dalla contemplazione umana . . . nondimeno l'una con l'altra ha qualche poco di similitudine nel modo”, *Comento*, 250.
- 57 Amongst the poetic passages which offer obvious points of comparison are Lucretius *De rerum naturae* v.737–40 “It ver et Venus”; Ovid, *Fasti* v.194–95; Horace, *Odes* 1.30; Poliziano, *Rusticus*, ll.210–21. On *Primavera* in relation to contemporary poetry and festivals, see Warburg's seminal essay, Sandro Botticelli's “Geburt der Venus” und “Frühling”: eine Untersuchung über die Vorstellungen von der Antike in der italienischen Frührenaissance (Hamburg: Voss, 1893); Charles Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love. Botticelli's 'Primavera' and Humanist Culture at the Time of the Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Pierre Francastel, “La fête mythologique au Quattrocento: Expression littéraire et visualisation plastique”, in *Oeuvres II: La réalité figurative: Éléments structurels de sociologie et de l'art* (Paris: Ed. Gonthier, 1965), 229–252; *idem*, “Un mythe poétique et social du Quattrocento: La Primavera” (1952), *ibid.*, 253–66. For a summary of interpretations of *Primavera*—poetical, occasional (epithalamium), political and philosophical—see Liana Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism and Medici Humanism in Botticelli's Mythological Paintings* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 47–63; Dempsey, *Portrayal*, Introduction; Giovanni Reale, *Le nozze nascoste o la Primavera di Sandro Botticelli nell'ottica dell'Umanesimo fiorentino* (Milan: Bompiani, 2007). See Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli. Life and Work. Complete Catalogue* (London: Elek, 1978) 1, 81, on the painting as celebrating the wedding of Lorenzo de' Pierfrancesco de' Medici with Semiramide Appiani.



FIGURE 5.1 Botticelli, *Primavera*, c. 1482. Florence, *Uffizi*.

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Primavera has been read as a figure for the Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul's descent into generation.⁵⁸ The tradition of philosophical fable to which *Primavera* might appear closest, however, is that blending of hexaemeral commentary with Platonic myth which flowers in the Chartres school and its reading of Calcidius.⁵⁹ The procession of allegorical figures emerging from one another is reminiscent of the procession of personifications in Calcidius, as well as depicting Ovid's account of Chloris' pursuit by Zephyr and her change

58 Wind, *Pagan Mysteries* 113–27. Further Neoplatonic readings include: Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies. A Study in the Neoplatonic Symbolism of his Circle", *JWCI*, 8 (1945), 7–60; Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1960), 191–200; Joanne Snow-Smith, *The Primavera of Sandro Botticelli: A Neoplatonic Interpretation* (Peter Lang: New York, 1993) who proposes a four-level figural interpretation and adduces Claudian's *De raptu Proserpinae* as a source.

59 See Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae*, Prose 2, on Nature's regeneration of the world as sky, sea and earth regain the ornament plundered by winter; maidens emerge from trees, nymphs have flowers on their laps, Flora presents her gown, Persephone returns and all is in a *miro certamine* to win Nature's grace. In Metrum 3, Zephyrus brings a hail of flowers, Spring sets the meadow alight with a purple glow, the emerging flowers are contrasted with earth as a cradle and the constellation of flowers on earth is like heaven.

into Flora in *Fasti* V.193–214.⁶⁰ It is however the centrality which the tradition of Platonic fable gives to the relation of matter (*silva*) and exornation that is most suggestive. The painting shows the tension between the blackness of the grove and the exornation of the earth with species in the most explicit manner.⁶¹ The flowers which flow like breath from the inspired Chloris are an animating force; they enliven the potentiality of earth which they light up with their forms. Thus in contemporary poetic language, Lorenzo de' Medici referred in the *Comento* to “la primavera quando Flora di fiori adorna il mondo”.⁶² The tension between figured surface and mysterious darkness in the painting also points to its allegorical nature, with its disclosures made through ‘veils’ of metaphor. The Graces, whose dance as companions for Venus shows the temporality of becoming, and the contemplation of heaven by Mercury who gazes at the *invisibilia*, likewise accord with the themes of Platonic fable. The great question of matter, its primordial nature and its informing by the ornament of species, occupies the main space.

If *Primavera* indeed addresses this theme, it depicts the mystery, beauty and cyclical temporality of form's flowering in matter with a lyric grace redolent of Horace, Ovid, Petrarch, Poliziano and Lorenzo de' Medici.⁶³ To this is joined an encyclopaedic attention in depicting the *varietas* of botanical species, a pictorial equivalent to the flower catalogues in Poliziano's *Rusticus* ll. 181–201 and Boccaccio's *Ameto* 26.20.⁶⁴ At a rhetorical level, the flowers are topoi of the pleasant place, images for sophistic *ekphrasis*, like Philostratus'

60 On Calcidius' use of female personifications, see Dronke, *Spell of Calcidius*, 18–21. Claudia Villa suggested the painting represents Capella's *De nuptiis*, with Philologia as the central figure and 'Flora' as Rhetoric in “Per una lettura della “Primavera”. Mercurio “retrogrado” e la Retorica nella bottega di Botticelli”, in *Strumenti critici*, 86, n.s. 13, 1 (1998), 1–28. Giovanni Reale develops Villa's thesis in *Botticelli: La “Primavera” o le Nozze di Filologia e Mercurio* (IdeaLibri: Rimini, 2001) and *Le nozze nascoste*.

61 Cf. the flowery mantle held out to Venus as she comes ashore in the *Birth of Venus* as an image for nature ‘clothing’ herself in the species which are the *exornatio mundi*. The robe also recalls Macrobius' comment on the variegated robe in which Nature conceals herself as an *integumentum*.

62 Lorenzo, *Comento* 306, quoted in Wind, *Pagan Mysteries* 116.

63 Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 118, 120, remarked on the Graces as illustrating Horace's lines on their dance in *Odes* 111.21; 1.4. Contemporary to Botticelli, Mancinelli in his 1492 Horace commentary speaks of each season as “fleeing” that before it (*Odes* 1v.7); he also refers to the chorus of the Graces beating the earth in *Odes* 1.4.6–7.

64 On the botanical detail in *Primavera*, see Mirella Levi d'Ancona *Botticelli's Primavera. A Botanical Interpretation including Astrology, Alchemy and the Medici* (Florence: Olschki, 1983).

description of the Hōrai in the *Imagines*. Finally, if we see the flower-covered nymph as descending from allegories of nature as the force adorning the earth in cosmological fables, *Primavera* shows this nymph turning into something spectacular. The flower-painted or embroidered gowns of cosmological figures later dwindle into a staple of Renaissance theatrical depictions, from Jacopo del Sellaio's panels depicting Petrarch's *Triumphs* (Museo Bandini, Fiesole) to Elizabethan and Jacobean paintings of ladies in masque costume.⁶⁵

Primavera shows how rich pictorial fable can be, and ornament provides a way of relating its allegorical and lyrical levels—it is both content and signifying mode. More than any other painting, it depicts the way that fables of *exornatio mundi* could dramatise the dyadic patterning of form and formlessness, played out against the cyclical rhythms of becoming. It represents the procession of species and shows this “exornation” as the creation of a setting or habitat. The fleeting figures—in which we might see Petrarchan motifs—stress the role of movement in this process. Its depiction of the ornament of nature as a catalogue of flowers also corresponds to the encyclopaedic handling of *ornatus mundi* we shall see in Landino, Perotti and Caelius Rhodiginus.

Ornatus Mundi and Encyclopaedism

Pliny rehearsed the dual meanings of *kosmos*, and he was translated by Landino and echoed by Caelius Rhodiginus (Ludovico Ricchieri) in *Antiquarum Lectiones* (1516) and by Perotti in the *Cornu copiae*.⁶⁶ Landino in his *Proemio al Comento Dantesco* also wrote of the world as the poem of God revealed through the inspired discourse of the poet or philosopher which contains encyclopaedically all kinds of knowledge and “all that men have done, have known and have contemplated”.⁶⁷ Landino uses Hermetic and Homeric topoi when he claims that Dante's mind could range through all things and contain all knowledge like the ocean and he frames his version of Pliny's encyclopaedia within

65 On the dress of Nature as an *exornatio mundi*, see Alan of Lille, *De planctu naturae*, Prose 1.7-Metre 2. For Elizabethan paintings, see Marcus Gheeraedts the Younger's allegorical portrait of a lady in masque costume (Hampton Court).

66 Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 11.3.4: “et Graeci nomine ornamenti appellaverunt eum et nos a perfecta absolutaque elegantia mundum”, “the Greeks called the world by the name of ornament and we call it *mundus* from its perfect and pure elegance”. Landino translates: “universale macchina la quale per l'ammirabile ornamento suo da' Greci cosmos da' Latini mondo è nominata”, *Scritti critici e teorici*, ed. Roberto Cardini (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974), 1, 81.

67 “è Idio sommo poeta, ed è el mondo suo poema”, “quantunque mai gl'uomini hanno fatto, quantunque hanno conosciuto, quantunque hanno contemplato”, *ibid.*, 141.

a pseudo Dionysian account of the ascent from visible to invisible, undergoing contemporary rehearsal by Ficino.⁶⁸ The encyclopaedia and 'theological poetry' reflect universal ordering, the poem more so in its allegorical and ornamental character, and in the demiurgic analogies for poetic invention.

Landino's formulation of the dual meaning of *kosmos* also echoes Ficino's commentary on *Symposium*, *El libro dell'amore* 1.3: "lo adunameno di tutte le forme e Idee i Latini chiamano Mondo e i Greci Cosmo che ornamento significa".⁶⁹ Ficino in his commentary on *Phaedrus* claims the four theological levels of scriptural exegesis for Platonic interpretation of the gods and for his method in his commentaries.⁷⁰ Landino, interpreter of the 'allegorists' Virgil and Dante, similarly affirmed the 'four senses' of scriptural typology for poetic exegesis which he revitalised with contemporary Neoplatonism.⁷¹ In this he also followed the medieval allegorical tradition of Bersuire in *Ovid Moralised*, and Dante's claiming of theological typology for his *Comedia* in the Can Grande epistle and *Convivio* 2.1.1–15, where literal, allegorical and moral levels are claimed for fiction, reserving the anagogical level for Scripture.⁷²

68 On Dante's oceanic character, see *Prolusione Dantesca*, *Scritti*, *ibid.*, 54. The Hermetic image of man who can range through all creation appears in Pico's so-called "Dignity of Man" *Oration*. On poetic *mania*, see also Landino's 1462 *Praefatio in Virgilium*. On the ascent from visible to invisible, see *Proemio al volgarizzamento della Naturalis Historia*, in *Scritti*, I, 83: "Come di grado in grado da l'infima parte d'ogni grande edificio alla più eccelsa s'arriva, così la mente nostra... dalle visibili cose alle invisibili perviene". Cf. Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Sandra Niccoli (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 6.4: "From the highest level to the lowest point in nature, all things pass through the proper intermediaries", "dal sommo grado a lo infimo della natura, tutte le cose per debiti mezzi passano".

69 *Ibid.*, 11–12.

70 Ficino, *Opera*, (Basel, Henricopetrus, 1576), II, 1370: "Sicut Christiani Theologi in divinis eloquiis quatuor sensus observant, literalem, moralem, allegoricum, anagogicum et alibi quidem hunc, alibi vero illum praecipue prosequuntur, ita Platonici quatuor habent multiplicandorum deorum, numinumque modos, aliumque multiplicandi modum alibi pro opportunitate lectantur. Ego quoque similiter in commentariis meis, alibi aliter quatenus locus exigit interpretari, et distinguere numina consuevi".

71 Landino speaks of the "natural" (literal), allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses in the *Proemio al Commento Dantesco* (*Scritti* I, 152). For Dante as a Platonist, see Ficino's introduction to his 1468 translation of Dante's *Monarchia*; on Dante studies in Florentine Humanism, see Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On Dante as theologian, see also Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, 575–6, 599.

72 On the Can Grande letter, see Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 374, 440–45; Charles Singleton, "Dante's Allegory", *Speculum*, 25, 1 (1950), 78–86; R.H. Green, "'Dante's Allegory of Poets' and the Medieval Theory of Poetic Fiction", *Comparative Literature* 9 (1957),

The same Plinian phrase is expounded by Caelius Rhodiginus in the *Antiquarum Lectiones* 1.5, an encyclopaedic collection of miscellanea, preceded by a discussion of the creation and exornation of the world which cites Platonic and hexaemeral sources. Rhodiginus identifies exornation with *varietas* and with the manifestation of divine majesty; he cites Plutarch and Galen on Pythagoras, the first to call the world *kosmos*, and translates *Gorgias* 507e–508 on the bond and friendship between heaven and earth, gods and men in their modesty, orderliness (*ornatus*), temperance and justice.⁷³ Rhodiginus contextualises Pliny in a hexaemeral and Platonic tradition, also noting the Platonic continuity between moral qualities and physical elements.

Perotti echoes Pliny in a work conceived as a commentary on all authors; Pyrrho Perotti's dedication states that Perotti left no word intact and that he seems to have wished to interpret the whole Latin language.⁷⁴ The work has been regarded as a dinosaur of Servian style annotation, although it had considerable contemporary success.⁷⁵ The poems Perotti glosses certainly disappear beneath a morass of anecdote, grammatical and morphological detail, but the work is not inchoate; like its Plinian source it seems to have been intended for encyclopaedic garnering, as we saw it used by Cesariano and Prisciani.

The Plinian citation in Rhodiginus and Perotti, writers of rambling miscellanies, suggests a kind of encyclopaedism distinct from the hierarchical ascent through the liberal arts as a cycle of disciplines. The relation with *exornatio*

118–28; John Scott, "Dante's allegory of the Theologians", in *The Shared Horizon*, ed. Tom O'Neill (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), 27–40; Auerbach, "Figura", in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 11–76. Pierre Bersuire (d. 1362), known and admired by Petrarch, proposed poetic allegory with literal, natural, historical (euhemeristic) and spiritual (moral) senses in the second edition of his *Ovid Moralised*, Book 15 of *The Moral Reduction*. See Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 317–24, 366–72, for Bersuire's multi-level mode as a response to scriptural typology and a development of the 'secular allegory' which William of Conches and Bernardus Silvestris evolved from Macrobius with their varied 'integumental' readings of fable (*ibid.*, 118–22).

73 Caelius Rhodiginus, *Antiquarum Lectionum Libri xxx* (Venice: Aldus, 1516), 13. At 1.4, on creation, Rhodiginus cites Alcinoüs amongst the Platonic and hexaemeral sources.

74 "Nam sicut graeci Cosmon: quod apud eos ornatum significant: ita nos a perfecta absoluteque elegantia vocavimus mundum", Perotti, *Cornu copiae*, 72r. See Pyrrho Perotti's dedication, *ibid.*, 1r. Similar praises were offered by Vespasiano da Bisticci, quoted in Martine Furno in *Le Cornu copiae di Niccolò Perotti. Culture et méthode d'un humaniste qui aimait les mots*, (Geneva: Droz, 1995), 15.

75 Anthony Grafton, "On the scholarship of Politian and its context", *JWCI*, 40, (1977), 155, calls it the "most preposterous result" of the line-by-line commentary tradition. Furno, *Le Cornu copiae*, 14, notes thirty eight editions printed between 1489–1536.

mundi in these works lies in the twofold abundance of words and things. Such associations persist: Scaliger in the opening lines of his 1561 *Poetices libri septem* 1.1 compares the *ornatus mundi* with the regulation and ordering of speech.⁷⁶ In one of the latest Renaissance commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Paolo Beni compares the 'flowers' and 'lights' which vary poetry to the flowers of spring, the fruits of autumn, the colours of dawn and the stars in heaven.⁷⁷

Perotti's long word lists show an enthusiasm for words—especially rare words, or which refer to exotic things—as things to be collected, an attitude shared with contemporary Humanists.⁷⁸ He includes extensive discussions of the names of precious stones and colours (including words for luxury materials and plants), to be gathered up, delighted in and deployed in new settings by the readers.⁷⁹ The *Cornu copiae* represents ancient languages as a nexus of related terms (grammatical, semantic, or morphological) and a thesaurus of words as precious objects to be 'set'. This view of words as something like mosaic *tesserae* is a major theme in Renaissance treatment of ornament, as is the related topos, the garland, with its mixture of poetic, triumphal and cosmic allusions. These are noted by Perotti, who gives the garland sustained attention.

For Perotti the garland's interest lies in its relationship to *chara* ("id est gaudium"), chorus (noted also by Mancinelli and Beroaldo) and, in particular, its use in triumph.⁸⁰ The chorus-corona association, which appears in Cicero, *Orator* 48.160 and Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIX.30, carries cosmological allusions, in the flowers and the dance of the stars as the exemplars of *ornatio mundi*.

76 Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* (Lyon: Antonius Vicentius, 1561), 1.

77 Paolo Beni, *De Poesi et Aristoteleae Poeticae Praestantia et Utilitate Oratio in In Aristotelis Poeticam Commentarii* (Venice, Apud Guerilium, 1624), 1–2: "quantum abundat Ver floribus, Autumnus pomis, Aurora coloribus, coelum luminibus, quantum suavissimis orationis quasi floribus, pomisque referta est poësis, et pulcherrimis coloribus luminibusque distinguitur ac variatur".

78 On the combing of texts for antiquarian detail, see Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 83–98, on the philology of Roman Humanists such as Leto or Calderini and their Florentine and Bolognese counterparts and rivals, Poliziano and Beroaldo.

79 See *Cornu copiae*, 86v ff. At 119r *color* is noted amongst compounds from *colo*, described as surface ornament "coloribus faciem: domos: vestes: ac reliqua omnia ornamus . . . Colores apud Rhetores vocantur ornamenta orationis".

80 *Cornu copiae*, 270r–271r. Perotti discusses the sacred origin of the garland, its materials and uses, noting the etymology of the anthology and the varieties of triumph; he concludes with the physical uses of *corona* to describe the circle around the moon or another star. The derivation of chorus from *chara* appears also in Beroaldo's commentary on Propertius 1.3.5 (Venice: Boneto Locatello, 1487).

Perotti notes the derivation of 'garland' (*stephanos*), from *stephein* (to surround, crown) and claims a shared etymology with *strophe*.⁸¹ Antonio Mancinelli and Filippo Beroaldo in their commentaries on Horace and Propertius rehearse Petrarchan discussions of the garland a figure for the *poetica facultas* and its genres.⁸² Alberti organised a poetry contest, the *Certame coronario*, to encourage imitation between Tuscan, Latin and Greek through the use of classical metre in Tuscan poetry; in the *Intercoenales* he speaks of the wreath as a symbol of joy and glory.⁸³ Such connotations are evident in the Renaissance use of garlands, encircling heraldic bearings and portrait busts, and the garland as a motif which showed "sommo spettacolo di perpetua e honorata fama" is discussed late into the Cinquecento.⁸⁴ In short, the cosmological associations of the garland as chorus (chorus of the heavenly bodies, chorus of the Graces (*Charites*) or *Hōrai* dancing out the seasons) are joined by the garland as image for the fame or triumph won by poetry—a triumph which may imply a temporal return or renovation. The relation between chorus, garland and *Charites* is thematised in *Primavera*, where the theme of renovation has been linked to Medici propaganda on the return of the golden age.⁸⁵

The other aspect of the garland is its interweaving of diverse plants and thus its exhibition of variety. Like mosaic, the garland is a composition from fragments. Mosaic and garland would converge in the Renaissance emblem, which drew on the "garlands" of epigrams gathered in the Greek Anthology, and on the meaning of emblem as insert or mosaic. Both terms also carried triumphal

81 Ibid., 270v: "est autem corona quam graeci σ[τ]εφανον vocant: a n[ume]ris olim Strophia olim απο του στέρφειν: quod vertere est: dicebant: postea per diminutionem Strophiola appellata".

82 See Mancinelli, commentary on Horace, *Odes* I.1, on the *poetica facultas* and the crowning of poets with ivy, whose evergreen leaves signify the ever-youthful god who binds things together; and on *Odes* III.4 on laurel leaves as a symbol for poetry. Beroaldo's commentary on Propertius I.16, II.5, III.1 and IV.1, contrasts the laurel crown of epic with the elegiac ivy garland.

83 On the *Certame coronario*, see Gilson, *Dante*, 128–31; on the *Intercoenales* see Kristin Lippincott, "The Genesis and Significance of the Fifteenth Century *Impresa*", *Chivalry in the Renaissance* edited S. Angelo (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 70.

84 Luca Contile, *Ragionamento di Luca Contile sopra la proprietà delle imprese* (Pavia: Girolamo Bartoli, 1574), 7v. Contile speaks of garlands as more prized than gold or gems.

85 On the Medicean iconography of the painting, with its *mala aurea*, see Cristina Acidini Luchinat, *Botticelli. Allegorie mitologiche* (Milan: Electa, 2001), 28–107; Lightbown, *Botticelli* I, 70–81; II, 52, on the painting as named "Garden of Atlas" or "Garden of Hesperides" in Medici inventories.

associations, the garland with its mixture of ephemeral display and enduring fame, the mosaic with its implication of *spolia*.

Quattrocento Commentaries and Poetic Philology: Mosaic

Bruni's figure of mosaic for eloquent speech reappears in Alberti's *Profugiorum ab aerumna libri* (early 1440s) where an eloquent speaker is compared to the inventor of mosaic flooring who created picture after picture with scraps of marbles:

to adorn a floor and distinguish it from the other surfaces of the temple, he took little scraps of marble, porphyry and jasper left over from the whole structure. Fitting them together in accordance with the colours and shapes he composed picture after picture, making the whole pavement splendid. This work gave as much pleasure as the greater ones of the rest of the building. The same has occurred amongst the *literati*—the intellects of Asia and especially the Greeks, over a long period, invented all the arts and disciplines. They constructed in their writings a sort of temple to Pallas and Pronoia, the Providence of the Stoics.⁸⁶

The lofty Temple of Providence contrasts with the experimental character of mosaic work, which permits rearrangement and reinvention. It shows that originality is possible even when there is apparently nothing new to be said. It recalls Ausonius' prefatory epistle to *Cento Nuptialis*, where he compares the *cento* to a puzzle where geometric shapes made from bone are rearranged to make pictures of countless objects.⁸⁷ The mosaic pavement thus connotes a

86 "per coadornare e per variare el pavimento dagli altri affacciati del tempio, tolse que' minuti rottami rimasi da'marmi, profidi e diaspri di tutta la struttura, e coattatogli insieme, secondo e loro colori e quadre compose quella e quell'altra pittura, vestendone e onestandone tutto el pavimento. Qual opera fu grata e ioconda nulla meno che quelle maggiori sl resto dello edificio. Così avviene presso de' litterati. Gl'ingegni d'Asia e massime e Greci, in più anni, tutti insieme furono inventori di tutte l'arte e discipline; e construssero uno tempio e domicilio in suoi scritti a Pallade e a quella Pronea, dea de' filosofici stoici", *Profugiorum ab aerumna libri*, ed. Giovanni Ponte (Genoa: Tilgher, 1988), 81–82, following translation of Grafton in *Alberti*, 163. The passage is noted also by Ida Maïer in *Ange Politien, La Formation d'un poète humaniste 1469–1480* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 213–14.

87 Quoted in Scott McGill, *Virgil recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–3. McGill notes that *cento* comes from Greek *kentrōn*, needle or needlework.

creative freedom although it carries the possibility that the arts may become absorbed in their interrelationships, at the cost of their wider significance.

This attention to metaphors of mosaic appears also in Perotti, in Domizio Calderini's Statius commentaries, or in Poliziano's follower Crinito in *De honesta disciplina* (1504). Poliziano in *Miscellanea* I describes the abstruse references in his text as "vermiculata . . . dictio, et tessellis pluricoloribus variegata", which will be appreciated by more refined readers.⁸⁸ Perotti, Crinito and Calderini cite discussions of mosaic in Pliny and Statius, *Silvae* 1.3, on the Tiburtine villa of Manlius Volpiscus.⁸⁹ Crinito (read by Alciati) notes rhetorical use of the phrase "emblema vermiculatum" for "well composed speech" ("lexim bene compositam"), and "speech elegantly composed with varied figures and colours".⁹⁰ The phrase, used also by Perotti, appears in Cicero, *Orator* 149, *Brutus* 79.274 and in Bruni's *De interpretatione recta*.⁹¹ Crinito, like Perotti, notes that literary use of *vermiculatus* comes from the satires of Lucilius but does not mention Cicero as their source. In *Orator* 149, Cicero quotes the lines from Lucilius where the overwrought style of Albucius is satirised by Scaevola:

quam lepide *lexeis* compostae ut tesserae omnes
arte pavimento atque emblemate vermiculato

88 Poliziano, preface to *Miscellanea* 1, in *Opera* (Venice: Aldus, 1498), A2r.

89 Perotti, *Cornu copiae*, 55r; Crinito, *De honesta disciplina* XXII.1; Calderini, commentary on Statius, *Silvae* 1.3. All note the *asarotos* or 'unswept floor' mosaic in Statius *Silvae* 1.3, ll.53–57; cf. Poliziano, *Rusticus* 1.294 on *silex asaroticus*.

90 Crinito, *De honesta disciplina* XXII.1 (Lyon: Gryphius, 1543), 329–31. In Plinian fashion, Crinito distinguishes the varieties of mosaic: *musea* or *musiva*, *lithostrata*, *tessellata*, *asaroton*, *xilostrata* and *cerostrata*. He discusses 'modern' mosaics in Rome (the *Navicella*), the Florentine Baptistry, where he calls the sun moderator and chariot, and the marquetry in St Helena, Venice. *Lithostrata* should have qualities that "give both charm and elegance through fitting variety and many-shaped grace of the picture" ("apta varietate, ac multiformi picturae gratia venustatem simul et elegantiam referant"). Crinito's attention to visual and rhetorical mosaics appears in Contile's *Ragionamento* on *imprese*, which lists mosaics, intarsia and inlays, including multicoloured clothes and "testura di parole" (24r). For Alciati's reading of *De honesta disciplina* 22, see Henry Green, *Andrea Alciati and his Book of Emblems* (London: Truebner, 1872), 35–36.

91 Perotti, *Cornu copiae* 55r; Crinito, *De honesta disciplina* XXII.1. Perotti gives *vermiculatum* as an adverb for *minutim* and notes the miniature character of *opus vermiculatum*, "now called mosaic, from *musaeum*": "minuta opera facere . . . qualia sunt quae nunc museis museaca vocat" (*Cornu copiae*, 135v). The reference to *musaeum* lies in the association of the Muses with grottoes; following Pliny, *museaca* are artful arrangements of stones (*pumicibus*) which give the image of a cave whereas *vermiculata opera* represent things in mosaic.

How charmingly he *fait ses phrases*, set in order like the lines
Of mosaic in a pavement, and his work entwines.

The allusion to *emblema vermiculatum* is thus ironic and quoted by Cicero in description of the puerile effect of laboured style (“cum infinitus tum puerilis labor”, *Orator* 149).⁹² The shift from disparagement to a compliment, as when Bruni uses the term of Plato, suggests the Humanists’ interest in overt artifice, even of a kind derided by the ancients as precious or affected. One drawback of the Humanists’ fascination with figures for insertion is that metaphors for ‘collected’ and ‘interwoven’ material can come to shape larger conceptions or approaches, so that ideas of meaning are adjusted in the light of figurative topoi for stylistic procedures.⁹³ This tendency to aestheticism is striking in one of the most elaborate Humanist works about poetry, the *Sylvae* of Poliziano.

Poliziano’s Varied Titles

Mosaic and garland as ‘gathering’ terms reflect the interest in appropriate containing structures for the multiplicity of detail discovered by the new learning. Poliziano privileges terms that suggest a random, non-teleological encyclopaedism for his major works in philology and poetic scholarship: *Miscellanea* and *Sylvae*.⁹⁴ In the hands of Crinito, and later Humanists, the *silva* and miscellany do indeed become unstructured accumulations of detail, which display aggregation rather than ‘variety’. Early uses of *encyclopaedia* itself, coined in the Quattrocento from the *cyclios paideia*, conceive diverse content as a many-coloured object, as when Francesco Pucci writes to Poliziano praising his *Miscellanea* for “illius ενκυκλοπαιδειας versicolorem”—where *versicolor* is

92 Cf. *Orator* 12.39 on the miniature, overworked character of sophistic epideictic, quoted in Chapter 2.

93 “Renaissance literary theorists... couched their literary ideas in images and symbols which remained plastic and variable. Often these images became coalesced or interwoven. These theorists toyed with critical imagery as medieval logicians toyed with syllogisms”, Robert Clements, *Picta poesis* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e letteratura, 1960), 40.

94 For early history of the *Sylvae*, in particular *Nutricia*, see *Sylvae* ed. Francesco Bausi (Florence: Olschki, 1996), xxxiii–liv; Peter Godman, “Poliziano’s Poetics and Literary History” *Interpres* 13 (1993), 114 ff. On Poliziano’s *Miscellanea* as an example of ‘disordered’ genres which mix extracts from other writers with the author’s own readings or analyses, see Neil Kenny, *The Palace of Secrets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 48. See Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), for comparison of Poliziano to the Hellenistic scholar-poet Callimachus.

perhaps best understood as a rendering of *poikilia*.⁹⁵ Such titles, unlike medieval terms such as *speculum*, do not promise a reflection of universal ordering through the organisation of disciplines. In this tradition is the celebration of poetry as the *summa* and synthesis of the liberal arts which appears in Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis* and Landino's *Praefatio in Virgilio* and *Prolusione Dantesca*.⁹⁶

In *Panepistemon*, Poliziano's introduction to his lectures on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he groups dialectic, grammar, rhetoric, poetry and history together under the heading *philosophia rationalis*.⁹⁷ There are precedents for Poliziano's grouping in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, or in Averroes' version of the *Poetics*, translated by Hermann the German.⁹⁸ Poliziano's arrangement severs dialectic from metaphysics and ethics from rhetoric, poetry and history, thus splitting the *studia humanitatis* propounded by Salutati (moral philosophy, history, rhetoric, poetry and grammar).

Poliziano's grouping is underpinned by his conception of the *grammaticus* as an interpreter and critic of all texts, where linguistic, philological expertise is extended to a universal discipline.⁹⁹ In this conception of the arts, the miscellany will show its universality as it gathers more kinds of texts. In the preface to the *Miscellanea centuria prima* (printed 1489), Poliziano describes *varietas* itself as *expultratrix* and *irritatrix*, in keeping with the corrective work

95 For Pucci's letter, see Poliziano, *Epist.* vi.4. Cf. Poliziano's letter to Lucio Phosphorus (*Epist.* 111.15) in defence of his "linguistic monstrosities" (*portenta verborum*) in the *Miscellanea*, where he defends varied style and eclectic imitation, noting "sit ipsius eloquentiae non vultus, non color unus". Robert Fowler, "Encyclopaedias: Definitions and Theoretical Problems" in Peter Binkley ed., *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts Proceedings of the Second COMERS Conference, Groningen* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 3–28, claims that from Quintilian's discussion of *enkyklios paideia* in *Inst. orat.* 1.10.1 the term encyclopaedia was coined by fifteenth century humanists such as the Vatican librarian Platina in praise of the school-master Vittorino da Feltre.

96 See Landino, *Scritti* 1, 45; *ibid.*, 20: "poeticam disciplinam non dicam unam ex iis artibus quas nostri maiores liberales appellarunt, sed quae illas universas complectans".

97 For comparison of Poliziano's organisation of the arts with that of other Humanists see Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism of the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 1, 1–13.

98 See Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 277–307.

99 On the *grammaticus*, see Poliziano's introduction to his lectures on the *Prior Analytics*, the *Lamia*, ed. Ari Wesseling (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 16–7. Godman, *Poliziano to Machiavelli*, 117–18, compares Poliziano's vindication of his capability to teach philosophy in *Lamia* to Landino's earlier rivalry with the Byzantine Aristotelian Johannes Argyropoulos; Landino's lectures to the *Tusculan Disputations* proclaimed, whilst apparently disclaiming, his expertise in expounding philosophy.

of the *grammaticus*.¹⁰⁰ In analyzing and correcting the mass of texts, the *grammaticus* also discloses patterns of grammatical structure and literary allusion. This kind of patterning is given its poetic form in the *Sylvae*, with their dense interweaving of allusions and imitation.

Silva belongs to a group of terms for miscellanies whose figurative nature is remarked in antiquity, by Atticus Gellius in *Attic Nights* and Clement of Alexandria in *Stromateis*.¹⁰¹ As they note, titles like “meadows”, “patchworks”, “honeycombs”, “embroidered cloths” carry allusions to the decorative character of the miscellany, its *poikilia*.¹⁰² Poliziano discusses the *silva* and quotes Clement’s *Stromateis* in the preface to the *Miscellanea* I.¹⁰³ The *Sylvae* are exemplars of a poetic philology, at once poetry and scholarship, which Poliziano may have intended as a substitute for poetic theology.¹⁰⁴ They formed proluisions to his courses on the ‘theologian’ poets Homer, Virgil, Hesiod.¹⁰⁵ The *silva* as a literary form alludes to disorganised material or miscellanies of occasional verse, and Statius and Quintilian describe its conception as a rushed jotting of ideas in the heat of the moment—a disenchanting version of the divine

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- 100 Poliziano describes the *Miscellanea* as a purgative which will restore and evacuate the reader’s stomach enfeebled by over-sweet foods, suggesting a reference to lazy scholarship (*Opera*, A2r).
- 101 Clement, *Stromateis* VI.1, PG 9, col. 209; Aulus Gellius commented wryly on the vogue for “ingenious” and “refined” titles for miscellanies in *Attic Nights*, Preface 6–10.
- 102 Clement compares miscellanies to plantations in parks where fruit trees are not separated according to species, saying that the outline of his work is “promiscuously variegated like a meadow”. He describes lovers of learning who compose miscellaneous works as “gathering flowers in variation” (*poikilōs exanthisamenoi*).
- 103 Poliziano discusses the *silva* in the dedication of the *Miscellanea* where he describes it as “inordinatam et confusaneam, quasi silvam”, mentioning Aulus Gellius, Aelian in the *Poikilē Historia*, whose works are more pleasing for variety than for order (“varietate sunt, quam ordine blandiores”) and the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria, called “quasi strangula picta”. Poliziano, *Miscellanea* I in *Opera*, A1r–1v.
- 104 Poliziano’s poem concerning Venus and love, the *Stanze per la giostra*, debunks the “philosophy of love” popularised by Ficino’s *Symposium* commentary. The *ninfa* Simonetta, who wears a flowery gown, weaves garlands, sits in a meadow and germinates flowers in her steps, is a phantasm or *larva* sent to deceive the protagonist Giulio by an ensnaring and debasing Venus; the Minervan figure on his standard reveals herself in a *fallace sonno* as Fortune. The *Stanze*, written to celebrate the tournament of Giuliano de’ Medici, were left unfinished at his murder in the Pazzi conspiracy. On the role of *larvae* in the *Stanze*, see Dempsey, *Renaissance Putto*, 172ff.
- 105 The first three *Sylvae* were printed immediately after the lecture courses in 1482, 1483 and 1485, with *Nutricia* appearing in 1491, five years after the lecture course; see *Sylvae*, ed. Bausi, xi.

madness of poetic *furor*.¹⁰⁶ Calderini in his commentary on Statius' *Silvae* links *furor* with the *silva*, noting the sudden "heat" and onset of *furor*, which fills the mind like a full sail, swollen with many lines poured forth and leaves it empty when it departs, and the work is discharged.¹⁰⁷ Poliziano in his *Praefatio in Quintilianum et Statii Sylvas* noted the ornate, studied character of the supposedly effusive, chaotic *silva*; characteristics exemplified by his erudite *Miscellanea* which he similarly presented as unstructured jottings, made in the heat of the moment.¹⁰⁸

In the *Sylvae*, fables of *furor* appear alongside the *silva*, with its connotations of flashing thought, disorderly matter and careful study, or *sancta contagio*—the inspiration which passes from elder to younger poet, teacher to pupil.¹⁰⁹ Beroaldo also uses the notion of "poetic inflammation" which possesses *grammatici*, complementing the divine *afflatus* of the poet.¹¹⁰ The extremely dense

106 See Statius, *Silvae*, dedication to Stella, 2–3; Quintilian x.3.17, on the speed and heat of the *silvae*, which he criticises. Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics*, 25, lists references to the 'raving' of the inspired poet in Horace (*Odes* III.4; *Ars poetica* 455), Pliny the Younger (*Letters* VII.4), Fulgentius and Isidore (*Etymologiae*, I.39.4) who derives *carmen* from *carere mente* (to be mad).

107 Calderini, commentary on Statius' *Silvae* in *Epistola* (Rome: Pannartz, 1475), 5r: "Quom vero furoris vis non nihil aliquando sibi indulgeret et subito cuidam calori inserviret: quem tum ad exitum alicuius operis non producebat: sed multis versibus effusis vela illa tumida ingenii: suo vento destituta flaccescebant: excogitatum est huius scriptionis nomen ut sylva appellaret". Calderini praises Statius for retaining the heat of impetus in his *Sylvae*, and notes heat and fury in Statius' other poetry (ibid., 6v).

108 Poliziano, *Opera*, aazr, on Statius; at ibid., A3r, he claims his *Miscellanea* were composed in a disjointed, speedy manner ("saltuatim et vellicatim... ex tempore potius quam a cura"), at odds with the careful scholarship of the work and Poliziano's presentation of its "purgative" function.

109 On "sacred contagion", see the last of the *Sylvae*, *Nutricia* ll. 190–193: "sancta legentem/concutiunt parili turbam contagia moto/deque aliis alios idem proseminat ardor/pectoris instinctu vates": "sacred contagion strikes the crowd of readers in the same way, and sows the same ardour from one poet to another, as an instinct in the breast". The *Sylvae* contain exemplars of *emulatio* of older by younger poets, commencing with the infant Achilles who touches the lyre of Orpheus in "piety" and to whom Poliziano compares himself (*Manto* ll. 23–30). Even the originary instance of *furor*, the blinding of Homer for access to the god, is woven with mediating texts and intertexts; see *Ambra* ll. 260–294.

110 "Hi [grammatici] poetica inflammatione calentes divinas interpretationes excudunt". Beroaldo also likens the inspired poet's effect on the interpreter to the action of a magnet, repeating that the poet is inspired by god, the interpreter by the poet's *furor*. The veils, *involuta* and figures of the poet are explicated by the illustrative, copious exposition of the commentator: "poetae officium sit obliquis figurationibus poema velare et sententias concinniter implicare. Interpretes involucri explicat: obscuras illustrat: arcana revelat: et

patterning of inter- and intra-textuality in the *Sylvae* shows a vision of *imitatio* which is simultaneously paedagogic and ‘inspiring’. It is not only sources which are woven together, but the three tongues where poetry has achieved fame, brought into what Poliziano terms the *triplex lingua*.¹¹¹ The *Sylvae* also play out the movement towards organisation, from the unsorted matter (*silva*) of undifferentiated (or unedited) poetic texts to images for praiseworthy artifice.¹¹²

These images concern principally arts of inlay and interweaving, such as textiles or garlands. In the first *Sylva*, *Manto*, Virgil’s fame is said to outshine the peplos of Athena. *Manto* ends with the Graces weaving garlands with a “threefold hand” (*triplici dextra*) in a meadow where the “pious bees” feed on flowers.¹¹³ This string of allusions suggests reference to the Horatian bee as a figure for eclectic imitation, to the *triplex lingua*, to the three genres and styles typified by Virgil and the ‘three crowns’ of Tuscan poetry. *Manto* describes the genres of Virgilian poetry as a *topographia* which rises from pastoral scene to the terrific landscape associated with epic. This account culminates in the line “discors pulchrum facies ita temperat orbem”, where *discors facies* “tempers” the world’s beauty (*Manto* l.361). The curious allusion to *discors* as ‘tempering’ makes more sense if it is taken in the sense of ‘varied’ and if we recall that Poliziano’s friend, Pico della Mirandola, defined beauty as *discordia concorde*.¹¹⁴ Pico’s definition stressed his view of the gulf between creator and creation; God is beyond predication and beauty cannot be viewed as an emanation which passes from the divine into the world. Thus beauty concerns the harmony and patterning of created things; in a word, *varietas*. If Poliziano’s

quod ille strictim et quasi transeunter attingit: hic copiose et diligenter enodat”; Beroaldo, commentary on Propertius, dedication to Minus Roscius (Bologna: Hectoris, 1487), a2r. The passage of inspiration from poet to reader or commentator appears also in Calderini’s commentaries on Statius’ *Silvae*, *Epistola*, 3v.

111 *Rusticus* concludes as Poliziano prays that Florence, mother of poets, may grant him learned eloquence in the *triplex lingua* (ll.567–569). The *triplex lingua* is not just recovery of the classical languages (exemplified by the performances of Greek tragedy in Poliziano’s circle), but the scholarly study of the vernacular, a process exemplified in the *Raccolta Aragonese*.

112 In *Manto* ll.40–43, the narrator wanders amongst the *copia* of Virgil’s poetry like a woodman on the slopes of Mount Ida, uncertain where first to lay his axe.

113 *Manto* ll.319–50.

114 Pico della Mirandola, *Commento sopra una canzone de amore composta da Girolamo Benivieni*, II.8, in *De hominis dignitate, Heptaplus, De ente et uno* ed. E. Garin (Florence: Vallecchi, 1942), 495. Pico also calls beauty “amica inimicitia e una concorde discordia”—beauty appears with composite, not simple things and “contrarietà” as “proporzionata commistione”.

formulation is informed by Pico it might deepen understanding of Poliziano's attitude to divine *furor* and his conception of *varietas*. The beauty of the world as the *varietas* of creation distinct from the creator provides an appropriate analogy for the complex vision of language in Poliziano.

The second *Sylva*, on bucolic poetry, *Rusticus*, contains a virtuoso mosaic of exotic words in description of a rich man's house with its inlay and hangings.¹¹⁵ The third *Sylva*, *Ambra*, on Homer, contains still denser figures befitting the paradigm for poetic universality: the threads of oriental textiles figured with "breathing faces" turn into the colours of speech and the threads of Homeric style, which then run into the stream of speech of the oceanic poet.¹¹⁶ Finally, in *Nutricia*, on poetics, the poets of the *triplex lingua* are celebrated with epigrammatic conciseness, as elements in a garland presented at the work's conclusion to Lorenzo de' Medici, the auspicious 'laurel' shading Florence in whose protection the *silva* of poetry grows anew.¹¹⁷

Like the decadent art criticism of the *fin de siècle*, *ekphraseis* of rare artworks provide an occasion for displaying words as exotic objects and precious artifice mirrors Poliziano's sophisticated craft as poet-scholar. The *Sylvae* are an elaborate textual mosaic or intricate garland—a surface varied with a wealth of 'jewels' and 'colours'.¹¹⁸ 'Praise' shifts from the moral condition illuminated by ornament to the qualities of the ornament itself. Bruni's concern with the *ornamenta dicendi* as illuminating the circumstances in which acts happen, has disappeared. The activity which the *Sylvae* concern is teaching, illustrated by the pedagogic fables they relate and Poliziano's assertions on his conception of Humanism as scholarship, not ethics.¹¹⁹ This distinguishes Poliziano

115 *Rusticus* ll. 292–304. Cf. the palace of Venus in *Stanze per la giostra* which is described in an ornate interlay of textual sources; the description of an image of Venus Anadyomene which corresponds to Botticelli's painting is a mere detail in an *ekphrasis* of a panelled relief door.

116 *Ambra* ll. 481–95.

117 The encomium of Lorenzo echoes his device, the laurel sapling sprouting from a withered branch, with the motto "Il tem revient".

118 On Poliziano's 'mosaic' style, his *varietas docta* and *contaminatio* see Ida Maïer, *Ange Politien: la formation d'un poète humaniste, 1469–1480* (Geneva: Droz 1966), 203–15.

119 In *Epist.* III.15, Poliziano notes his *Miscellanea* are for teaching, not persuasion; in the introduction to the *Miscellanea*, he presents his work for the study (*cubiculus*) and school, not the forum and curia, *Opera*, A² r. Cf. *Epist.* III.11 to Lucio Fazini (Lucius Phosphorus), on *humanitas* as meaning *paideia* as much as *philanthropia*: "Humanitatem cum dico, non magis φιλάνθρωπιαν quàm etiam παιδείαν intellego: utrumque Latinè quidem scientibus significant", *Opera*, d2r. Aldo Scaglione, "The Humanist as Scholar and Poliziano's Conception of the *Grammaticus*", *Studies in the Renaissance* 8 (1961), 66, notes the similarity

from his older contemporaries, such as Calderini who in his Statius commentaries (printed 1475) endorses public duties and Landino, whose commentaries on Horace (1481–82, based on lectures from the 1460s) concern the moral content of Horatian poetry.¹²⁰ Landino's vision of Horace as a moral philosopher, who portrays all conditions of human life also shows an ethical understanding of *varietas*.¹²¹

Varietas

Pedagogic imitation which conflates poetic theology with the transmission from teacher-poet to pupil appears in other poetics, such as Marco Girolamo Vida's *De arte poetica* (1518), which propounded Virgil as inspiring universal model, transmitted through the relation of teacher and student, like Poliziano's *sancta contagio*. Vida speaks of inspired composition as a savage heat which penetrates the body, brought on by the 'god' but this febrile state must cool, becoming subject to revision based on study and judgement.¹²² The description recalls the *silva* as a heat and sudden physical state whose productions must be corrected when the 'flux' has abated.¹²³ The *silva* thus becomes a way

to Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* XIII.17, who contrasts a misunderstanding of *humanitas* as *philanthropia*, defined as "dexteritatem quandam benevolentiamque erga omnes homines promiscua" with a correct rendering of *humanitas* as *paideia* as "eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes".

- 120 In his dedication to Agostino Maffei, Calderini writes "I think our life is really useless unless we do something which stands out in public use", "omnemque vitam nostram plane inutilem fore intellego: nisi aliquod elaboremus: quod in publicum extet usum", *Silvae* in *Epistola*, 3r.
- 121 Landino, *Scritti critici* I, 199–200. The text of the hurriedly printed commentaries (Florence: Antonio Miscomini, 1482) was poor, with incorrect readings and variants chosen. Caelius Rhodiginus speaks of Landino as sleeping profoundly when he composed it. For Landino, Horace like Cicero exemplifies the union of moral wisdom and eloquence, as discussed in the preface to his lecture course on Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (1458), *Scritti critici* I, 5–15. By the contrast, the Horatian commentaries of Antonio Mancinelli, printed 1491, are full of antiquarian detail concerning topography, ancient spectacles or rites and myth.
- 122 Vida, *De arte poetica* trans. and comm. Ralph Williams (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), II. 428–50. Note the distinction to Beroaldo's vision of poetic *mania* as a magnetic force which inflames interpreters.
- 123 See Chapter 7 for a more profound association of poetic inspiration with 'contagion' in Girolamo Fracastoro's *Naugerius sive de poetica*, c. 1540.

of relocating *furor* within a poetics of *imitatio*, founded in teaching, literary scholarship and revision.

In Vida, the godlike character of poetry is linked to its varied speech. Such variety concerns the transformation of figured speech, which reflects the dissimilarity of all things that breathe beneath the stars—beasts, men, painted birds and silent fish.¹²⁴ Here the hexaemeral topos of the ornament of the species is used to stress individual diversity and variety as change. Thus Vida compares the delight taken in the alternation of objects so that they assume the appearance of other things to the pleasure taken in the reflections of things in water.¹²⁵ For Vida, poetic variety and figural transmutation can be compared indifferently to *exornatio mundi* and to protean images or phantasms long associated with sophistry.

The interest in miscellaneous genre or 'disordered' encyclopaedism does not just imply a new vision of literary kinds, but of the cycle of disciplines and what they reflected. If the cycle of the arts ceases to reflect the ascent from the *visibilia* to the *invisibilia* in which 'cosmic' conceptions of ornament were so central, what happens to the relationship of ornament and the didactic function of the arts? The diverse encyclopaedic productions of Perotti, Rhodiginus and Poliziano gesture to the *varietas* of the world as their paradigm but the relationship is one of analogy, not of allegorical *integumentum*. The miscellany suggests the juxtaposition of things which are of different kinds and which are assembled in a 'disordered' manner. This would appear to be against the idea of ornament as *kosmos* and as species; the task of the Humanist is to reveal or create order in the disorder of the *silva*. The Humanist who explores linguistic structure, the generation and permutations of meaning by grammar and the genealogy of texts is something like a natural historian, hence the suggestiveness of Pliny as an analogue for Humanist miscellanies. In this model, we also see a shift from the notion of contemplation to that of discovery or invention.

Here we can try to draw together some comments about *varietas*, which was to be so closely linked to the Renaissance understanding of ornament. Ornament and variety are intimately linked, as hexaemeral literature shows, where the 'filling' of each element with the species of heaven, water and earth is the 'adornment' of creation. Humanists certainly allude to universal *varietas* as exemplar for their work, as the attempts to recover ancient eloquence and enrich vernaculars involve the perfecting of language's capacity to reflect

124 Vida, *De arte poetica* III.32–43. On the god-granted nature of poetic variety, cf. *ibid.*, III.76–83, III.358–72.

125 *Ibid.*, III.58–75.

the world. Bruni's simile of the ornaments of speech as stars has its ultimate source in the language of *Timaeus*.

Alongside the cosmic paradigm, there is also the ethical *varietas* which Landino praised in Horace, and a medieval association of *varietas* with metrical variety, based on a misleading etymology by Isidore, who derived lyric from *lērein*, signifying the strings of the lyre and varied songs which it accompanies.¹²⁶ *Varietas* becomes linked with philology by the Quattrocento Humanists—Calderini in his dedication to his commentaries on Statius' *Silvae* speaks of his philological work as an exploration of *varietas*.¹²⁷ Poliziano's handling of *varietas* is literary and philological, as in his endorsement of the study of post-classical authors, such as Statius and Quintilian.¹²⁸ Where Poliziano rehearses claims for poetry as a vessel of knowledge, as at the opening of *Nutricia*, the last *Sylva*, the end is to show the praise of poetry, not the matter it contains.¹²⁹

Discussions which regard *varietas* as created from a miscellany or *silva* stress the skill of the artificer who can draw together a plethora of detail to reveal a pattern. When Giraldis Cinthio in his apology for romance declares that there is nothing in the world that the poet cannot imitate, he uses the image in praise of the digressive multiplicity of romance, brought to pattern by poetic skill, as in Ariosto's metaphors of weaving for narrative.¹³⁰ Topoi for blending or interweaving appear throughout descriptions of non-allegorical lyric poetry,

126 *Orig.* 3.22.8, "Lyra dicta ἀπὸ τοῦ ληρεῖν, id est a varietate vocum, quod diversos sonos efficiat"; 8.7.4 "Lyrici poetae ἀπὸ τοῦ ληρεῖν, id est a varietate carminum". See Karsten Friis Jensen, "Horace in the Middle Ages", *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 296. Some medieval manuscripts of Horace carry musical notation for the singing of the *Odes*, *Epodes* and *Carmen saeculare*.

127 Calderini, commentary on *Silvae* in *Epistola*, 3r, dedication to Agostino Maffei.

128 See Poliziano, *Praefatio in Quintilianum et Statii Sylvas*, which culminates with quotation of the bee passage from Lucretius 111.11. On Poliziano's *varietas*, see inter alia Maier, *Ange Politien*; Emilio Bigi *La cultura del Poliziano* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1967); Scaglione, "Humanist as Scholar", 49–70; Eugenio Garin, "L'ambiente del Poliziano" in *La cultura filosofica del rinascimento italiano* (Bologna: Bompiani 1961, repr. 2001), 335–58; Grafton, "Scholarship of Politian"; Vittore Branca, *Poliziano e l'umanesimo della parola* (Turin: Einaudi 1983); Attilio Bettinzoli, *Daedaleum Iter* (Florence: Olschki 1995); Godman, "Poliziano's Poetics"; idem, *Poliziano to Machiavelli*; Clare Guest, "*Varietas, poikilia* and the *silva* in Poliziano", *Hermathena* 183 (Winter 2007), 9–48.

129 *Nutricia*, ll.34–96.

130 Giovanni Giraldis Cinthio, *Discorsi di Giraldis Cinthio intorno al comporre de i Romanzi, delle Comedie, delle Tragedie e di altre maniere di Poesie* (Venice: Giolito, 1554), 26.

from the Horatian bee to the Petrarchan garland and the complex allusions to interwoven artifice in Poliziano's *Sylvae*.¹³¹

The romance poet, who can imitate all things, looks superficially like demi-urgic cosmological poet but the end of the former is pleasure in the exhibition of narrative skill and in the use of illusions. In *Bellezze del Furioso* (1574) Orazio Toscanella calls *Orlando Furioso* a mirror of human actions, and praises the poet's physical and moral encyclopaedism in recounting natural phenomena, agriculture and ethical guidance.¹³² The poet is not so much a 'theologian' as a sophist who dresses words and adorns them with colour like the rainbow and gives pulse, breath, voice and life to dead things.¹³³ Sophistic notions of art as the artificial semblance of life and imitator of all things are muddled with the "microcosmic analogue" and the "literary organicism" whose Platonic lineage is traced by Coulter.¹³⁴

Landino in praise of Horace and Poliziano's *sancta contagio* in different ways stress the paedagogic role of *varietas*. Ethical diversity in literature however had a problematic aspect, probed by Plato in *Republic* and associated particularly with comedy. At the end of the Renaissance, Ripa in *Iconologia* personifies "Comedia" as clothed in "gypsy dress" ("habito di cingara") to signify the random character of variety in the imitation of unequal, disparate objects:

The diversity of colours denotes the varied and diverse actions expressed in comedy which delight the mind, no less than variety of colours delights the physical eye.¹³⁵

131 In *Xandra*, III.10, Landino speaks of the lyric triad—Pindar-Horace-Petrarch—who formed counterparts to the epic triad of Homer-Virgil-Dante. This triad appears in the Petrarch commentaries of Gesualdo (1553) and Daniello (1541), and in Varchi's *L'Ercolano* (1570). At *Xandra* II.4 Landino groups together Callimachus, Propertius and Petrarch. On the bee topos, see Chapter 6.

132 Orazio Toscanella, *Bellezze del Furioso* (Venice, Piero dei Franceschi, 1574), 2r–3v.

133 Ibid. Simon Fornari, *Apologia to Esposizione sopra l'Orlando Furioso* (Florence: Torrentino, 1550), I, 47, compares the "ornaments" of *Orlando* to gems scattered through the work and to note all these places would be like counting the stars in the sky or the waves of the sea.

134 Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, 95–126, notes the biological analogy in speaking of matter, form and soul of literary works.

135 "La diversità de'colori nota le varie, e diverse attioni, che s'esprimono in questa sorte di poesia, la quale diletta l'intelletto, non meno che la varietà dei colori diletta l'occhio corporeo", Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Padua: Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625), 104. The description of the Old Comedy specifies that her torn multi-coloured robes show the "diversity and inconstancy of varied things gathered together in a composition, and also the varied style which mixes together various genres and kinds of things": "La diversita, et inconstanza

The 'gypsy' character of comedy's garb suggests a haphazard, ragamuffin quality which may delight but does not connote elevation or probity. We have seen multi-coloured embroidered robes as figures for cosmic *varietas*, worn by personifications of nature in cosmological fable or used in imperial ceremony to signify the divinisation of rule. Ripa's gypsy dress concerns ethical, not cosmological variety, and may descend from the embroidered, multi-coloured garment described by Socrates in *Republic* 557c as a negative metaphor for democracy, "varied with every custom", which delights the ignorant with its apparent charms and its license to *à la carte* individualism.¹³⁶ This delight in *poikilia*, which underlies the Platonic condemnation of poetry for its representation of varied moral types, is scrutinised in the first full-length commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Francesco Robortello's 1548 *Explicationes*:

Variety (for so I call the *poikilon* or *poikilia* as Proclus says) is when we imitate good men as much as bad, continent and just men as much as incontinent and unjust, thieves and adulterers. Plato does not approve this mixed variety, since if poetry has always one purpose, i.e. that it brings usefulness to the education of men, it is not necessary to imitate any other kind of man than the good and the wise. Since men are naturally more prone to pleasure than virtue and wisdom, if variety is in the poem, of necessity it will corrupt their morals while they study to be similar to those [representations]. *Poikilia* is a most delightful imitation, says Proclus, but it is not adapted to education, which is to say it is not pertinent to the life in which men should be properly instructed. I excerpted these notes from Proclus in the book on Poetic Questions.¹³⁷

di più cose, che poneva insieme in una compositione, et anco il vario stile, meschiando insieme diversi generi di cose", *Iconologia*, 106.

136 *Republic* 557c uses the adjective *poikilon* and compares the garment, embroidered (*pepoikilmenon*) with all flowers (*pasin anthesi*) to the polity 'embroidered' with all customs (*pasin êthesi*). The apparent beauty of the garment is signalled by the verb *phainesthai*.

137 "Varietas est (Sic enim appello τὸ ποικίλον, seu ποικίλιν à Proclo vocatum) cum imitatur tam bonos, quàm malos, temperatos, iustos, incontinentes, & iniustos, fures, adulteros; & huiusmodi mistim, nam Plato non probat hanc mistam varietatem, quia si poësis hoc sibi habet vnum propositum semper, ut utilitatem afferat institutioni hominum; non est necesse imitari ullum hominum genus, praeter bonos, et sapientes; nam si varietas insit in poëmate, illa cum hominess suapte natura propensiores ad voluptatem sint, quàm ad virtutem, & sapientiam, necesse est ut illorum mores corrumpantur; dum student illis similes esse. Est quidem (inquit Proclus) illa ποικίλη imitatio iucundissima; sed non est παιδευτική idest non pertinet ad rectè instituendam hominum vitam. Haec ego pauca excerpti ex Proclo in libro de Quaestionibus poeticis". Francesco Robortello, *Explicationes*

For Robortello, the way out of the problems of *varietas* lies in the elevated representation of things as they should be, derived from *Poetics* 2 and 9, which he sees as achieved by means of genre, with its implication of perfect kinds. The implications of this generic approach for ornament will concern us later.

Finally, *varietas* involves diversity amongst things of a certain class—qualities, creatures, words and so on. This marks its distinction from a heterogeneous accumulation, suggesting why we can regard Poliziano's *Sylvae* as exemplifying *varietas* while Crinito's *De honesta disciplina* is a medley. To illustrate, a mosaic may be created from stones or glass but not from glass and animals, for example. It is the shared category which makes contrast and thus tension possible, as Alberti describes pictorial *varietà* as diversity of posture in *De pictura* 11.40. This is an elementary logical point, but it underlies such criticisms of eclectic style as Bembo's derogatory comparison of Dante's style to a field where grain and weeds grow mixed together.¹³⁸

Class definition becomes more difficult to grasp when the category in question is expanded, as Poliziano claims for the *grammaticus* the right to scrutinise all texts, irrespective of content. Perotti's *Cornu copiae* in different ways also suggests an exploration of the universal *varietas* of language as it represents the world. A problematic aspect of this 'grammatical' approach is that distinctions between kinds and levels of meaning can appear secondary. Thus Perotti presents core metaphysical terms, grammatical schemes, morphological detail and literary anecdote without distinction between their levels of meaning. When language as a resource is given priority over its referents and its signifying relation, the evocations of universal *varietas* can become reduced to the level of artifice. This can affect the conception of the world in the world-poem topos, as Erasmus in *De copia* speaks of the "admirable artifice" with which nature has "painted" everything in the world—as though the *exornatio mundi* becomes a universal *poikilia*, suggesting accidental diversification rather than the ordering of species.¹³⁹ This issue was exacerbated by the logical reforms attempted by Humanists such as Valla in the *Disputationes dialecticae*,

in *Aristotelis* (Florence: Torrentini, 1548), fols. 165–166. Simon Fornari in the *Apologia to Esposizione sopra l'Orlando Furioso*, 1, 33 describes of Robortello's learned eloquence adorning Italy with ancient learning like a great, clear river which carries golden sand and precious gems: "la cui dotta a facondia et scrivendo et parlando à guisa di grande, et limpido fiume, che seco porti arena d'oro, et pretiose gemme fa ricco, et adorno il paese Italico dell'antiche discipline greche, et latine".

138 Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua*, 11.20, ed. Carlo Dionisotti (Milan: TEA, 1966), 178.

139 "Gaudet ipsa natura vel in primis varietate, quae in tam immensa rerum turba nihil usquam reliquit, quod non admirabili quodam artificio depinxerit", Erasmus, *Opera omnia* 1.6 (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1988), 32–33.

who claimed that the transcendental properties (being, goodness, unity) can be reduced to specific determinations of *res*.¹⁴⁰

We have suggested that the privileging of the representation over the represented can result in the presentation of moral acts or states as objects of aesthetic judgement. Such presentation was fostered by the recovery of ancient rhetoric with its discussion of ethical disposition as a form of artifice. The emphasis on particular meaning—how a thing appears to us in given circumstances—presents opportunities for exploration of contextual significance and the articulation of specific situations. As Nancy Struever saw, it also marks a revival of sophistic concerns with appearance.¹⁴¹ If the world in its order and ornament is one paradigm for universal variety, the counter-image is Proteus, ancient image for the sophist, whose all-embracing metamorphoses showed only one form in each situation.¹⁴² The point is made neatly by Alciati, working with Erasmus' *adagium* "Proteo mutabilior" ("more mutable than Proteus"), who illustrates the instability of 'protean' eloquence founded on the imitation of antiquity.¹⁴³ The epigram asks Proteus why he changes shape and whether he has real form. The marine god answers:

signa vetustatis primaevi et praefero secli:
de quo quisque suo somniat arbitrio.¹⁴⁴

The lemma (motto) reads: "antiquissima quaeque commentitia"—the oldest things are invented. If it is loosened from ontology, *varietas* as the ornament of antiquity will turn into a welter of fugitive protean forms born in the fantasy.

140 For Lorenzo Valla's dialectical reform in the *Dialecticae Disputationes*, see Cesare Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo: "Invenzione" e "Metodo" nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1968); Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

141 Nancy Struever, *Language of History*, 47ff.

142 For Plato's use of Proteus as image for the sophist, see *Euthydemus* 288b–c; *Euthyphro* 15d; *Ion* 541e; in each case Proteus' shape changing is an image for the sophist or rhapsode who evades dialogic questioning. See Mary M. McCabe, "Mythical Figures in the *Euthydemus*", in *Ancient Philosophy of the Self*, ed. Pauliina Remes and Juha Silvola (New York: Springer, 2008), 109–23.

143 Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata* (Lyon: Bonhomme and Roville, 1550), Emblem 196. For "Proteo mutabilior", see Erasmus, *Adagia* 11.2.74, in *Collected Works* XXXIV, trans. R. Mynors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 262–82. Erasmus quotes *Ion* 541e and alludes to Vertumnus.

144 "I offer symbols of antiquity and very first times, concerning which everyone dreams up whatever he likes".

Topics and Style

We ended Chapter 6 with Proteus as an image for potentially unstable or inchoate variety. Proteus appears in Pico's *Oratio* along with the chameleon as an image for man, uniquely capable of ranging through the cosmos, and for the human property of speech in Erasmus' *De copia*.¹ Sannazaro, following Virgil's *Fourth Georgic*, uses him as a prophetic figure in *De partu virginis* 111.331–485 where the river Jordan relates how Christ's coming was prophesied at the cave of Jordan by Proteus.² Proteus' evil reputation, as a figure for lust and a Platonic image for sophistry, is played down, as he signifies the malleable character of eloquence and prophecy as the highest form of inspired speech, or of the imagination. Unlike the other lustful shape-changer, Vertumnus, who is associated principally with fruition and the varied cycle of the turning year, Proteus is oceanic, signifying instability as much as multiplicity.³

This instability haunts the stream of eloquence displayed by Erasmus in *De copia duplici rerum et verborum* (1512), designed to teach abundant style, and its counterpart, brevity.⁴ Style is meant to be a seamless means of conveyance, as suggested by Erasmus' repeated liquid metaphors for eloquence,

- 1 *Oratio*, ed. Eugenio Garin (1942, repr. Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1994), 8; Erasmus, *Collected Works* xxiv, *De copia*, translated Betty Knott, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1978), 302. Erasmus rejected Ambrogio Leoni's comparison of him to Proteus, likening himself instead to an actor cast in different roles (letter to Leoni, 15 October 1518). For Proteus in Humanist literature, see A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Proteus Unbound", in *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation and History of Ideas* ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, Lowry Nelson Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 437–75.
- 2 Proteus features repeatedly in Sannazaro's *Piscatory Eclogues* (*Piscatoria*, Naples, 1526), in Ecl. 1, "Phyllis", l. 88; Ecl. 3, "Mopsas", l. 62; Ecl. 4, "Proteus", where the god rehearses history; see Sannazaro, *Latin Poetry*, trans. Michael Putnam (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Sannazaro discusses his use of Proteus in *De partu virginis* and *Arcadia*, Ecl. 6.37–54 in a letter of April 13, 1521, in *Opere volgari* (Bari: Laterza, 1961), 372–73.
- 3 On Vertumnus as god of turning, return and fruition, see Propertius IV.2, where his statue recounts the story of Rome; history as narrative of change comes together with nature's cycles of transformation. Beroaldo in commentary on Propertius IV.2 quotes Sulpicia in Tibullus, *Elegies* 111.8, l. 14 on Vertumnus: "Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet".
- 4 *De copia* was revised and expanded in successive editions of 1514 and the Froben editions of 1526 and 1534. At 1.2 Erasmus notes the Sophists' contraction and expansion of arguments and at 1.5 remarks that the same principles of choice and selection underlie *copia* and brevity. For amplification in Medieval poetics, see Faral, *Arts poétiques*, 61–85.

as wax remodelled, protean transformation, or copious speech as a surging golden river.⁵ *De copia* provides a good contrast to the *Cornu copiae*.⁶ It shows the educational ends Poliziano claimed for *humanitas* developed into a paedagogic tool. It also shows the ‘thesaurus’ of the Latin language presented by Perotti digested into headings which are rhetorical, grammatical and topical. Erasmus’ use of topical headings as categories for creating abundant argument was probably derived from the work of Rudolph Agricola in developing a Humanist logic or dialectic which could serve textual analysis and invention of arguments.⁷ In keeping with the dialectic developed by Valla, George of Trebizond and Agricola, *De copia* views dialectic as a tool of eloquence, rather than an instrument of metaphysics.⁸

Of these three Humanist revisions of dialectic, Valla’s project is the most radical, involving a critique of metaphysics as the basis of logic. Amongst Valla’s criticisms of the artificial and technical language used by Scholastic Aristotelianism is the argument that transcendental terms can be reduced to reference to a single object: thus *unum*, *bonum* and *verum* should be understood as *bona res*, *vera res*, *una res*.⁹ This makes the particular thing central to specific determinations, what can be said about an individual thing at a particular moment.¹⁰ It also leaves *res* as the only transcendental property which can

5 “divite quadam sententiarum verborumque copia aurei fluminis exuberans”, *De copia*, in *Opera omnia* 1.6, 26. Erasmus acknowledged his use of Quintilian at *ibid.*, 26–27. Francis Bacon parodied *oratio fluens* in his sarcastic characterisation of the “flowing and watery vein” esteemed by the “delicate learning” of the sixteenth century when “the whole inclination and bent . . . was rather towards copie than weight”, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. G.W. Kitchin (London: Dent, n. d., first ed. 1861), 24.

6 Erasmus used the *Cornu copiae* in the 1508 *Adagia* 11.1.49, calling it “not unworthy”.

7 On Erasmus’ knowledge of Agricola’s *De inventione dialectica*, printed in 1515 although composed by 1479, see Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 218, 303–311. For the amplification of arguments from the *loci communes*, see the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, which Erasmus knew and attributed to Aristotle (*Adagia* 11.1.61). On Agricola and Erasmus, see Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism*, 122–57.

8 Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 55, 83 on Erasmus’ knowledge of George of Trebizond’s *Dialectica* (1470) and his comments on Valla’s *Dialecticae Disputationes* as a fundamental text in the new philology and philosophy. George of Trebizond also produced an *Isagoge dialecticae* (1433). On Valla’s dialectic in the *Disputationes* and the *Repastinatio dialecticae et philosophiae* (first version 1439) in relation to his influential *Elegantiae linguae Latinae*, see Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism*, 70–82; Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 114–15.

9 Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 48, discussing *Dialecticae Disputationes* 1.2, 646–7; 648–9.

10 Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 78.

be predicated of everything; correspondingly, Valla reduces the Aristotelian categories to substance, quality and action.¹¹

Valla's attack on Aristotelian-Scholastic logic is conducted in the name of a restoration of the unity which supposedly once existed between the trivial arts.¹² As Mack noted, his critique reveals an inadequate understanding of metaphysics, and the way its concepts functioned.¹³ One example is Valla's proposal that privation and contrariety are the same, a position which would abolish Aristotle's mean between contraries.¹⁴ Valla's critique of the artificiality of the potentiality-actuality relation, suggesting that we should instead say that something is convertible into another form, strikes at the final cause and the conception of matter as principle, rather than as a given thing.¹⁵ Valla's replacement of potentiality by the capacity to be converted is suggestive of the comparison in *De copia* of speech to wax to be endlessly remodelled. If we can only say what things are as they manifest themselves in particular, concrete states, we raise the old question of how verities can be distinguished from appearances.

Where Valla launches a critique of ontological realism in his dialectic, Georgius Trapezuntius (George of Trebizond) in his *Dialectica* (1434) showed indifference to metaphysical issues.¹⁶ He treats the predicates (genus, species,

11 For the reduction of the categories, see Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 59, on *Dialecticae disputationes* 1.17; these concepts are to be understood grammatically and Valla regards relation as a quality. The metaphysical definition of substance formed an object of Valla's critique, see *ibid.*, 50–53; Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 100–01. On the question of Ockham's influence on Valla, despite his expressions of Humanist distaste for the “barbarisms” of British logicians, see *ibid.*, 93–4; Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 49. Struever, *Language of History*, 44, notes the shared assumptions and tension with philosophical Realism in Nominalists and Humanists, despite their different arguments.

12 *Ibid.*, 42. Valla privileges rhetoric versus dialectic: the orator uses the syllogism clothed in purple, armed, decorated with gold and gems; his speech has the splendour and majesty proper to public appearance. Rhetoric loves ruling the open seas, flying with full sails, while dialectic rows near the shore and rocks. The syllogism is also compared to a village, rhetoric to a city; see *ibid.*, 64; Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 110–11.

13 See Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 88, on Valla's discussion of the tree of Porphyry where he declares that genus-species are the same of wholes and parts. Cicero, *De inventione* 11.14 speaks of species (*forma*) considered as part.

14 Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 89.

15 Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 59.

16 Vasoli, *ibid.*, 89–90, 93, notes George's indifference to the history of metaphysical discussion of the predicates and gives his sources as *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero's *De inventione* and *Topica*, Aristotle's *Organon*, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Boethius, *Liber de sex principiis* and medieval logicians like Peter of Spain and William of Sherwood. On Trapezuntius,

difference, property) as some of the loci from which argument is generated; he also stresses the use of mnemonics in the knowledge of these dialectical-rhetorical loci, a theme which will be central to Giulio Camillo.¹⁷ The topoi used by Trapezuntius recalls Cicero's grammatical expansion of the Aristotelian predicables; also in Cicero's *Topica* is the discussion of the topic or locus as the "seat" of an argument.¹⁸

In *De inventione dialectica* Agricola develops this dialectical-rhetorical method into a whole approach to the study of things and argument. This involves the topical reading of the best authors, the noting of topoi and commonplaces, the reconstruction of structures of argument and the noting of topical relations.¹⁹ The topics provide headings so we can analyse the nature of a thing and its parts and make apposite arguments, hence Agricola calls them a *thesaurus*.²⁰ He says that similarity if correctly applied opens up things and creates a sort of picture ("quandam . . . imaginem"); it is thus used by orators and, particularly, poets, for illuminating things (*illustrandum*).²¹ Mack argues that Agricola's topics are not a grid or machine, but a way of showing the variety of relationships which can be brought to the objects the argument seeks

see John Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: a biography and a study of his rhetoric and logic* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

- 17 For George's loci, which include Aristotelian categories and grammatical terms, and on mnemonic knowledge of loci, see Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 86–87, citing *Rhetoricorum Libri V* (Lyon: Antonino Vicentino, 1545), 215.
- 18 Cicero, *Topica* 2.7, "Itaque licet definire locum esse argumenti sedem". At *Topica* 18.71 Cicero lists the *sedes argumentorum*: definition, partition, etymology, conjugation, genus, species, similarity, difference, contraries, adjuncts, consequents, antecedents, contradictions, causes, effects, comparison. Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 143, notes the mixed Aristotelian-argumentative-grammatical nature of Cicero's topics. The discussion of topics in Cicero's *De inventione* 1.25.35–36, 1.28.41–43 recalls Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.
- 19 Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 138.
- 20 Ibid., 140. Mack, *ibid.*, 146, reproduces the table from *De inventione dialectica* (Cologne: Alardus, 1539), 368, which schematised the topics under the major heading of internal (in or around the substance) and external, divided into things necessarily joined (cognates and the *applicata*—time, place and *connexa*) and things not necessarily joined (accidents and repugnants). Agricola's topics are closer to Aristotelian categories and less overtly grammatical than those of Cicero; however, not all versions of Agricola's topics were identical (Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 130–31).
- 21 Ibid., 163, discussing *De inventione dialectica*, 142. Cicero, *Topica* 11.9, discusses definition as "opening up" what is enclosed in the subject ("quasi involutum evolvit").

to understand.²² Such flexibility would be lost in subsequent, mechanistic approaches to topics.²³

Unlike Valla, Agricola did not challenge the existence of universals; his project was not metaphysical critique but an exploration of argument, hence the attention he gives to brevity and *copia*, which concern presentation of things through topical argument, not an ontological account of them.²⁴ If we take this view, the protean malleability of language need not be a matter of philosophical concern; on the other hand, we reach a situation in which language becomes concerned with its own processes of signification.²⁵ With this in mind, we can turn to two very different applications of topics, in Erasmus' *De copia* and in Giulio Camillo.

We looked above at Bruni's interest in the way that the ornaments of speech disclosed things, 'illuminating' them as they appeared in a particular context. For Bruni, the *ornamenta* showed things as they appeared in ethical contexts—in a certain place, time, and way and his concern lay with products of human activity, such as cities, rather than metaphysical determination of essence and accident. By contrast, in *De copia* the capacity to adapt to a variety of contexts is central, rather than the disclosure of contextual significance. This may be another way of saying that emphasis has moved from what is disclosed to the capacity or manner of disclosing it. Erasmus' fluid metaphors of river or wax insist on the skill of the artificer but say nothing about the reality divulged, except that its representation is infinitely malleable. If we speak of things illuminated by metaphors as by stars we suggest that something comes to light through the specific disclosure of metaphor. It is harder to envisage what is 'illuminated' by the endless reformation of a piece of wax, save the plasticity of the material itself and the ingenuity of the artificer. Erasmus' celebration of

22 Ibid., 166–67.

23 For medieval mechanical devices for topical analysis/ invention, see the *rota Vergilii*, described by John of Garland in the *Parisiana poetria* Book 11 (c. 1220) which tabulated the instrument, style, topography, animal, plant, activity and profession appropriate to epic, eclogue and georgic as exemplified by Virgil. See *Enciclopedia Vergiliana* s.v. *rota Vergilii*, 586–87; Faral, *Les art poétiques*, 87–88. The *locus amoenus* is an example of such a topically invented place.

24 See Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 141, for Agricola's affirmation of universals, as in the *Questions on Universals*. On Agricola's treatment of *copia* and brevity, see *ibid.*, 216–17.

25 In *De inventione dialectica*, 396–7, Agricola notes that in writing our pleasure lies in the imitative language, not in the thing imitated; in paintings we do not admire the subject matter as pleasing but the skill (*ingenium*) of the painter; discussed in Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 214.

copious speech as wax to be constantly remoulded stresses its lack of a true or final form.

Erasmus' metaphors also suggest eloquent speech as a unified material, whose form is fugitive and unstable, while the golden river of speech at the opening of *De copia* implies a surface where 'lights' and 'gleams' appear. Erasmus uses these metaphors to emphasise the ideal of integration and unity which can be diversified, as opposed to the frigidity and falseness of a disjunction of surface and content, or the patchwork, fragmentary style which he elsewhere derides.²⁶

If *De copia* places the skill of the artificer foremost, Proteus and Odysseus, "river of eloquence", appear as figures for abundant style.²⁷ Odysseus, like Proteus, is an ambiguous figure, associated with the deceptive use of artifice. The celebrated variation exercises of *De copia* 1.33, where Erasmus shows three hundred and ninety five ways to express two epistolary formulae, suggests an imbalance between words and things. The potentially innumerable verbal forms suggest that there may be no one way to represent a thing, merely varied forms which disclose diverse aspects or appearances. Such a view would correspond to Valla's preference for verbs over subject and predicate combinations and his attempts at dialectical reform but can be argued to lead ultimately to a Protagorean conception of reality as known only through appearances and subjective perception. It could also negate any notion of ornament, as all things would be mere appearances and the relation between form or thing and ornament would disappear. Or rather, it would endorse an instrumental conception of ornament as pleasing, insubstantial appearance designed to persuade. While Erasmus' moral and educational aims were far from such a position, the celebration of the endless malleability of language, so closely linked to the *ornamenta dicendi*, does have a sophistic potential. The Humanists' denunciation

26 For Erasmus' criticism of patchwork and fragmentation, see *De conscribendis epistolis*, translated Charles Fantazzi, in Erasmus, *Collected Works* xxv (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1985), 13; in the Prolegomena to the *Adagia* in *Opera omnia* 11.1 (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1993), 66, he quotes Quintilian VIII.5.27–28 on the loss of structure if speech is assembled from small pieces: "oratio et e singulis non membris, sed frustris collata, structura caret"; See Chapter 2 for Quintilian's discussion of the *sententiae* as small, brilliant pieces.

27 At *De copia* 1.8 Erasmus notes that the study of *copia* will enable a writer to turn thought into more shapes than Proteus assumed; he echoes *Iliad* 111.222 and Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* xii.10.64 when he likens Odysseus to a river rushing with winter snows (*De copia* 1.5). Cf. Erasmus' praise of Virgil: "Quis fons, quis torrens, quis mare tot fluctius, quot his verbis inundavit", *De copia* 1.3, 30.

of Scholastic “sophism”, in the sense of fallacious argument, can distract us from their own engagement with the sophistic tradition.²⁸

Thus the attention to unified style, with its capacity to alter and transform, can raise issues about relation to referents. The endless progression of similitudes could denote distance from the object signified, as Trinkaus argued of Salutati. The gulf between the prodigious capability of the mind and hand in forming figures and the reality they represent is depicted visually in the most characteristic Renaissance artistic expression of ornament as variety, the *grotesche*, discussed below. These show that the proliferation of ornamental figures does not illuminate our knowledge of things, but rather places them in continuous regress. The *grotesche* also underline the gulf between knowledge of things in themselves and things as subjectively perceived in particular circumstances, as the Humanists claimed they could be disclosed by the ornaments of speech. In this sense they could be said to exhibit the *terminus ad quem* of sophistic notions of reality as the experience of phantasms arising from subjective impression.

The twofold model of *rerum et verborum* in *De copia* suggests the two-part model of argument and ornament which appeared in stark form in the Ramist reform. The Ramist reform is not our subject; briefly, it aimed to clarify the relation of dialectic and rhetoric by apportioning invention (topically based) and judgement, consisting of proposition, syllogism and method, to dialectic and restricting rhetoric to *pronuntiatio* and *elocutio*, defined as *exornatio orationis*.²⁹ It severed the shared or complementary relationship of dialectic and rhetoric posited from Aristotle to Agricola, while using the Humanist idea of a method of discursive invention which could be applied to all arts of speech. With the Ramists, ornament is the stylistic dressing which takes place once the dialectical parts of speech—argument and method—have been worked out. This places ornament ‘outside’ of arguments and augurs the decline of

28 For Humanist denunciations of Scholastic sophism, see Vasoli, *La dialettica* 16, 43 et passim; for Valla’s dismissal of the sophisms discussed in Aristotle’s *Sophistical Refutations*, see Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 90–91. Mack quotes Agricola’s discussion of Isocrates’ *Helen* in *De inventione dialectica* (ibid., 160).

29 See Ong, *Ramus*; Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 334–355; Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 333–601; Nelly Bruyère, *Méthode et dialectique dans l’oeuvre de La Ramée* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1984); Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism*, 161–200. The definition of *elocutio* as *exornatio orationis* comes in *A. Talaei Rhetorica e P. Rami praelectionibus illustrata* (Frankfurt: A. Wechel, 1581), 44r, quoted in Mack 339, n. 11: “Partes rhetoricae duo sunt, elocutio et pronuntiatio. Elocutio est exornatio orationis, eaque per se plurimum potest”. Ramist rhetoric reduced drastically the tropes to four (metonymy, synecdoche, irony, metaphor) and the figures to twenty one; see ibid., 339–41; Ong, *Ramus*, 277–78.

ornament into the cosmetic; as Ong recalls, Ramism contributed to the development of “styleless style” suited to scientific prose and the ‘methodist’ preaching of Protestant sects.³⁰ The identification of ornament with style and so with the whole representational surface of speech also provided conditions for the development of a lavishly decorative style, conceived as a figural mirroring or playing out of argument.³¹

In Italy, where Ramism circulated in a mediated form, discussions of the twofold model of argument and ornament appear vividly in such works as Sperone Speroni’s *Discorsi sopra Virgilio* (composed c. 1563–4, published posth. 1740).³² *Sopra Virgilio* praises Homer for maintaining parity between invention and ornament, while Virgil is censured for mismatching meagre plot with lavish ornament.³³ Speroni identifies poetry with ornament and ornament with amplification, regarding it as incompatible with brevity.³⁴ The poet should invent a *favola* from which amplification and ornament grow “naturally” in the poet’s *elocutio*.³⁵ Speroni envisages an analogical relation between argument and ornament, which, however, implies their distinction; where ornament is abused or mismatched with invention or plot, Speroni uses analogies of the statue gilded to hide its defects or the frame which outshines its painting.³⁶

30 Ibid., 283–84, 287; Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 334, on the “connection between Ramism and extreme Protestantism”. Ramus’ death in the St Bartholomew’s Eve massacre made him a Protestant martyr.

31 The highly ornate character of Elizabethan literature provides an example, given the success of Ramism in England. For example, see Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, 11.11 on the bathing scene in the river Ladon where the figural play of the text reflects the sparkling, moving surface of the river.

32 On the influence of Ramus and Agricola in Italy, see Vasoli, *La dialettica* 603–38, who notes that in 1562 Ramus refused a chair at the University of Bologna. Vasoli notes Speroni’s distinction between ‘scientific’ and ‘everyday’ uses of logic, with rhetoric and dialectic forming the basis of the second, concerned with the probable and the mutable conditions of human life (ibid., 606). For Speroni’s attitude to logic, see Eugenio Garin, *Discussioni sulla retorica in Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1954), 133–40.

33 See *Sopra Virgilio*, in *Opera* (Venice: Domenico Occhi, 1740), IV, 460, 476, 491, 512, 532, 571, 574–5. The critique of Virgil culminates in the astonishing statement: “L’arte poetica non era in Virgilio” (ibid., 571).

34 Ibid., 532–34: “il poeta non può esser breve, sendo suo proprio l’ornamento, il quale non si può contenere in breve spazio di parole . . . la poesia sia tutta ornamento”.

35 Ibid., 577–78, on Homer’s verses which grow naturally from his poem; marvellous plot must be accompanied by marvellous style: “la meraviglia della favola non si deve accompagnare elocuzione se non meravigliosa”, ibid., 512; cf. ibid., 534 on the “marvellous” character of poetic ornament.

36 Ibid., 575, 577–8, again on Virgil.

Speroni's twofold model of invention and ornament recalls Erasmus' model: *De copia duplici rerum et verborum*. The topics as a means of invention and amplification of argument and style provided an armature for this model. The association of topics and amplification goes back to Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.9.40—who associates amplification with epideictic.³⁷ Quintilian VIII.4.3 bases the amplification of arguments upon four methods taken from the topics—increment, comparison, reasoning and accumulation. There are also repeated links between topics and figures of speech, like Aristotle's discussion of metaphor in terms of genus and species in *Poetics* 21, 1457b; metonymy and synecdoche are tropes founded in logical analysis. Cicero's *sedes argumentorum* include topics which pertain to metonymy and metaphor: genus, species, similarity, difference, contraries, adjuncts, consequents, antecedents, causes, effects, comparison.³⁸ In *De inventione* II.26.78, the *loci communes* include the creation of a vivid verbal picture brought before the eyes of the audience, i.e. *enargeia* or *evidentia*. Quintilian compares *sententiae* to an incomplete *enthymeme*, and classifies them according to interrogation, comparison, denial, similarity, admiration—headings which recall Cicero's *sedes argumentorum*.³⁹ Quintilian's discussion of the figures of thought ("sententiarum figuris") calls them departures from a simple mode of statement.⁴⁰ The *figurae* are at times founded on topics such as comparison or consequence, and are also classified according to headings (suggestion, anticipation, qualification, concession, agreement, confession, ambiguity, concentration, refutation, etc.). The figures of thought are associated with amplification and digression, and said to be the movement and action of speech, without which it lies like a lifeless body ("Motus est in his orationis atque actus, quibus detractis iacet et velut agitante corpus spiritus caret").⁴¹ The association of the *figurae* with corporeal disposition and alteration in Quintilian comes together with the enlivening, illuminating effect of the ornaments of speech—and with the topics, linked with amplification.

37 Agricola doubted whether epideictic could be said to concern argument; see Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 254.

38 Cicero, *Topica* 18.71.

39 Quintilian VIII.5.9 refers to the *enthymeme* as *sententia ex contrariis*; Cicero in *Topica* 13.55 speaks of *enthymemata* as conclusions from contraries.

40 Quintilian IX.2.1. Cf. *ibid.* IX.1.26ff. for quotation of Cicero, *De oratore* III.201–08 on the "lights" of thought (*sententiae*) which resemble topics of invention.

41 Quintilian IX.2.4–5.

Camillo's Topics

In Italian Renaissance poetics, the most influential attempt to use the topics for style as well as invention was Giulio Camillo's (c. 1480–1544) creation of "topical figures".⁴² Charlatan or self-styled magus, Camillo sought to wed the art of eloquence to 'Cabalistic', alchemical and Lullian art, principally by means of the "memory theatre", simultaneously a mnemonic instrument and cosmic model, constructed in Venice and again for François I of France.⁴³ The association of topics and mnemonics appears earlier, in George of Trebizond and in Juan Luis Vives' *De anima*, where the mind wandering through memory expresses associations in terms of topical relations.⁴⁴

Camillo writes turgidly and obscurely, at variance with the eloquence he claims to impart.⁴⁵ In the influential *La topica o vero della elocuzione*, Camillo

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- 42 On Camillo's role in Cinquecento literary theory, see Bolzoni, *La stanza della memoria* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995); Vasoli, "Considerazioni su alcuni temi retorici di Giulio Camillo Delminio" in *Retorica e Poetica: Atti del III convegno italo-tedesco*, ed. D. Goldin (Padua: Liviana, 1979), 243–257; idem, "Giulio Camillo Delminio et l'art transmutatoire" in *Alchimie et philosophie à la Renaissance: actes du colloque international de Tours (4–7 décembre 1991)*, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin and Sylvain Matton (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), 193–204. Camillo's writings, except a Petrarch commentary, remained in manuscript until his death, when *Della imitatione* and *Delle materie* appeared, followed by two editions of *L'idea del teatro* (1550) and *Opere*, introduced by Ludovico Dolce (Venice: Giolito, 1552); a two volume *Opere* was printed by Giolito in 1560, with the second volume edited by Francesco Patrizi. For Patrizi's view of Camillo, see Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 144–49. For modern editions of Camillo's treatises, see Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e di retorica del Cinquecento*, 1 (Bari: Laterza, 1975).
- 43 On Camillo's relation to Francesco Giorgi, see Cesare Vasoli, "Considerazioni" and "L'art transmutatoire". On the memory theatre, see Paolo Rossi, *Clavis universalis: Arti della memoria e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz*, 2nd edn. (Bologna: Mulino, 1983); Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1966). Rossi notes that Pico had associated the *ars Raymondi* and the highest part of natural magic with cabbala in the *Apologia tredecim quaestionum*, quaestio v, *De magia naturali et cabala hebreorum*.
- 44 Vives, *De anima* III.354, 361. See Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 314–18, on the passage and Valla's influence on Vives. Vives in *De anima* III.355, speaks of reason progressing through the topics as it works from sense to abstract concepts; prudence is the skill in managing this process, equivalent to knowledge of topics in *De inventione dialectica*. Mack notes Vives' *De instrumento probabilitatis*, on dialectical invention, using topics apparently based on Agricola.
- 45 Camillo's garbled style appears in his writings and in Viglius Zuichemus' letters about Camillo to Erasmus of 28 March and 8 June 1532; see Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, ed. P. Allen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) IX, 479; X, 29–30. Rossi, *Clavis*, II8, calls the *teatro* "macchinoso e confuso".

states that the topics form the source both of arguments and figures.⁴⁶ His topical figures are invented from the four causes, the instruments of the efficient cause, antecedents, consequents, adjuncts, contraries, acts, qualities and quantities of bodies, appearances, similitude and comparison. Camillo schematises this familiar list into a grid for the finding of figures, employing instruments to systematise the process of *imitatio*.⁴⁷ The insistence that the same loci provide arguments and figures, and that the topics are necessary to imitation, since from them one can draw the arguments necessary to the *artificio del dire*, appears also in Minturno's *Arte poetica*, which combines a topics of invention and style with use of Hermogenes' *Ideas of style*, disseminated in Italian by Camillo.⁴⁸

With the topical figures, Camillo claims, it is possible to recreate figures like those made by great poets without copying; once the topical source of the figure is analysed, other figures of a similar kind can be produced.⁴⁹ The text is analysed into its *locuzioni topiche*, which are 'stored' in the places elaborated

46 Camillo, *La Topica*, in *L'Idea del Teatro e altri scritti di retorica* (Milan: RES, 1990), 235: "Né si potrebbero trovare queste locuzioni figuranti, sì come né ancor gli argomenti, se prima non si conoscessero li luoghi". On topics as common to argument and figures, and invented from the same places, cf. *Della imitatione*, *ibid.*, 172.

47 In *Delle materie*, Camillo employed the "Gorgo" as an instrument for analysis/ invention—a circle divided by seven diameters whose ends are labelled with opposing qualifications of the subject and topic of the poem: distance versus presence, coming versus leaving, goodwill versus ill-will.

48 Sebastiano Minturno, *L'arte poetica* (Venice: Valvassori, 1563), 48 (on imitation using the topics), 417: "le figure del dire [stanno] chiuse in quei medesimi luoghi . . . da' quali già gli argomenti si prendono". Minturno also reproduces Camillo's distinction of words into *proprie*, *traslate* and *topiche* (*ibid.*, 421–22). Camillo produced a *Discorso sopra L'Idée d'Hermogene*. On the influence of Hermogenes in the Renaissance see Annabel Patterson, *Hermogenes and the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Gérard Le Coat, *The Rhetoric of the Arts 1550–1650* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, Bern: Herbert Lang, 1975). Amongst literary treatises influenced by Hermogenes is Daniele Barbaro's *Della eloquenza* (Venice: Valgriso, 1557); Barbaro translated the notion of the affective character of stylistic qualities and their combination into his Vitruvius commentaries.

49 In *Della imitatione*, Camillo illustrates, using Lucretius as an example: "Once the art of Lucretius is understood [to consist] in taking the figure from the topic of consequents, with this same topic I can create another figure of equal or even greater beauty, which will be my own, except for the words with which it is expressed", "conosciute l'arte di Lucrezio . . . di levar la figura dal loco de'consequenti, potrò io dal medesimo loco formar un'altra di eguale e tallor di maggior bellezza, che dal tutto mio sarà, fuori che per le parole le quai la esprimeranno", *Scritti*, 166.

and finally physically constructed in Camillo's memory theatre.⁵⁰ Camillo insisted on the comprehensive nature of the topics, likened to the letters of the alphabet, a limited series of signs from which all things can be written, or the categories (*predicamenti*) of Aristotle, "the ten principles to which all things in heaven, earth and the abyss can be reduced".⁵¹

Camillo's model is mechanistic and universal, drawing on Lull's project to identify ontological and predicative categories; his theatre supposedly gave knowledge of things as well as discourse.⁵² Camillo presented his theatre model in various ways; in the *Idea del teatro* it is a Christian Cabbalistic model which serves to 'channel' the cosmological order, in *Della imitatione* it is a structure for invention in literature and art, as viewed by Viglius Zuichemus in Venice in 1532 and described ironically in a letter to Erasmus.⁵³ Zuichemus describes an arrangement of boxes and charts, dedicated to the figures of speech and containing passages from Cicero using those figures; while he ridiculed Camillo, Erasmus saw the potentially deleterious effects of Camillo's projects on Humanism.⁵⁴

In *Della imitatione* Camillo outlines a "theatre" of rhetoric, arranged on seven levels, which 'contain' all the matters which can be treated by an orator: the final level concerned judgement, necessary to the selecting and combining material from the previous levels. Camillo regards his model as translatable into other arts and sets out a theatre of *disegno* for visual art which again rises on seven tiers. These contain in their loci images of all animals (including humans) which can be drawn, depicted according to sex, age, role or work, movement, with the final level devoted to judgement, which teaches us how to combine all the preceding levels in order to depict, for example, a young

50 Compare Bembo who supposedly kept forty folders through which every epistle was passed in a process of stylistic perfection.

51 "a dieci principi tutte le cose che sono in cielo, in terra e nell'abisso si potessino ridurre", *Della imitatione*, *ibid.*, 180.

52 *Ibid.*, 172 "in the great fabric of my theatre are disposed in places and images all those loci necessary to hold in order all human *concetti*, all things that there are in the whole world"; "nella gran fabrica del Teatro mio son per lochi e per imagini disposti tutti quei lochi che posson bastar a tener collocati e a ministrar tutti gli umani concetti, tutte le cose che sono in tutto il mondo". Rossi, *Clavis*, 122, notes Camillo's fame as practitioner of Lullian art, mentioned by Jacques Gohery and Ruscelli.

53 See n. 45.

54 In response to Viglius, Erasmus compares the possible effects of Camillo's patronage by François I to the religious disruption caused by Luther: "vereor ne molitores isti non leviorum tragoediam excitant in studiis quam Lutherus excitavit in religione", *Opus epist.* x. 54, c. 5, July 1532.

soldier standing up with his right foot forward. Camillo did indeed influence two notable Mannerist art theorists—his friend the architect Sebastiano Serlio and Lomazzo's *Idea del tempio della pittura* (1591), a theory of art on a magical-esoteric model, both discussed below.

The mechanised conception of the combinatory role of judgement is striking. The subtleties of what is given or implicit in a context, which might be disclosed by metaphor or figure, are replaced by a system of coordination. Camillo's theatre produces simulacrum texts from the coordination of pre-gathered material, so that response to a situation is reduced to the combination of a series of prefabricated parts.

Camillo's model pushes everything onto the discursive plane and its topical conditions of transformation; the relation of *res* and *verba* is replaced by the symbolic correspondence between words and nature, transformed through alchemy.⁵⁵ The alchemical analogy also underpins Camillo's adherence to exclusive imitation of selected, 'golden' authors as material for transformation into simulacra texts.⁵⁶ Theatre provides a closed, encyclopaedic structure for the analysis and production of all potential locutions and the levels of symbolic correspondence.

In place of the relationship between *ornatus mundi* and ornaments of speech or *integumenta* we see in Camillo the overlay of a magical, operative model where the correspondences between things can be activated, and a topical model concerned with discursive structure, whose relation to things beyond itself is analogical.

Camillo's topical places serve equally for analysis and invention, storing and creating. If topics are not only arguments but figures, this implies a series which can be re-used and re-combined as the elements of all representations. This is particularly relevant for visual art, and Camillo's promulgation of a theatre of *disegno*. The postures, topographies, decorative details and 'hieroglyphs', rehearsed at different scales, levels and combinations in the repetitive *copia* of mid to late Cinquecento decorations suggest such a figural topics. In this situation, all representations potentially become universal since every

55 Patrizi praised Camillo for "expanding rhetoric so that he extended it throughout all the ample places of his theatre of the world", "l'allargò in guisa che la distese per tutti gli amplissimi luoghi del theatro di tutto il mondo", in Camillo, *Tutte le opera* II (Venice: Giolito, 1560, repr. 1567), 74.

56 On the comprehensive character of Camillo's loci "words and all things distinguished in their order which are sufficient for all human minds" and his advice to study perfect writers whose language is "uncontaminated", on analogy with alchemical work, see *Della imitatione* in *Scritti*, 180.

element refers back to the exhaustive topics of arguments and figures—a view argued *in extenso* by Lomazzo in astrological-magical terms. The pervasive yet standardised theatricality so notable in later Cinquecento decoration may be related to this topical character. Camillo's 'theatre' involves figures which are both symbolic and affective, and a theatre that is both a thesaurus for the visual display of arguments and a structure which works upon a spectator.⁵⁷ Camillo's import for artistic decoration thus lies not only in the visual invention and disposition of the *artes memoriae*, but in the combination of topics, allegory and moving image.

The "theatre of..."

The use of "theatre" and similar architectural metaphors such as "tempio" to describe structures for the placing and arrangement of topical or mnemonic figures is also associated with Camillo.⁵⁸ Samuel Quicchelberg, who catalogued the books and artefacts of the Fugger and Albert V of Bavaria,⁵⁹ contrasted the "improper" use of theatre in the titles of encyclopaedic works or emblem books with the proper use to indicate a large circular, oval or ambulatory structure, like the semicircular form of Camillo's "museum".⁶⁰ The 'theatre of' titling conventions censured by Quicchelberg, such as *theatrum mundi*, *theatrum sapientiae*, *theatrum memoriae*, suggest a topical reworking of the hexaemeral-encyclopaedic tradition.⁶¹ Such titling is taken *ad absurdum* in the treatises of Tommaso Garzoni: *Il Theatro de' vari, e diversi cervelli mondani* (Venice, 1583), *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (Venice, 1585), *L'hospitale dei pazzi incurabili* (Ferrara, 1586), *La sinagoga de gl'ignoranti* (Pavia, 1589) *Il serraglio de gli Stupori del mondo* (Venice, 1613). In its Baroque and 'conceptist'

57 This dual character of figures as affective and symbolic is developed in Lomazzo through the notion of the figure itself as an ornament.

58 See Bolzoni, *Stanza*, 202, 238.

59 See Elizabeth Hajos, "Referenceto Giulio Camillo in Samuel Quicchelberg's *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi*", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*, 25, (1963), 207–11; Julius Schlosser, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1908); Bolzoni, *La stanza*, 245–46; Adalgisa Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabilia: Il collezionismo enciclopedico nelle Wunderkammern d'Europa* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2005), 80–81; Horst Bredekamp, *The lure of antiquity and the cult of the machine: the Kunstkammer and the evolution of nature, art and technology*. Translated by Allison Brown. Princeton: M. Weiner, 1995, 28–30.

60 Quicchelberg, *Inscriptiones vel tituli theatri amplissimi, complectentis rerum universitatis singulas materias et imagines eximias*, 1565, quoted in Bolzoni, *Stanza* 267, n. 2.

61 See William West, *Theatres and Encyclopaedias in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

role, the theatre as topic provides an encyclopaedic structure where the insights of *ingenium* disclose qualities and similarities previously unseen.⁶²

This 'theatre of' titling implies a visual or spatial presentation of subject matter which facilitates taxonomy or diagrammatic abstraction.⁶³ One conspicuous feature of the 'theatre of' compared to *exornatio mundi* is its neutrality with regard to content: the 'theatre of' can indifferently show nature, artifice or things under any topical heading. This is apparent in Camillo's theatre models which can impart various arts—rhetoric, architecture, *disegno*, military art. Such schematic instruments shift theatre from its ancient associations with *theōria* to a theory-practice model applicable to any art, as Camillo claimed; the theory-practice terminology appears in the *Trattato* of Camillo's adherent Lomazzo.

Camillo boasts of his theatre as an artificial mind ("manufactura mens") which could effect transformations.⁶⁴ As Bolzoni shows, his project lay in the tradition of conceiving figures in the imagination as agent images (*imagines agentes*) and in speaking of "windows" in the heart which could reveal the thoughts—again conceived in figural, phantasmal terms.⁶⁵ As Lomazzo

62 See Calderón's *auto sacramentale*, *El gran teatro del mundo* and *La vida es sueño*; Quevedo, *Los sueños*; Gracián, *El Criticón*, Chapter 2 "El gran teatro del Universo"; Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*.

63 Ann Blair, *Jean Bodin and the Theatre of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 173, reproduces a diagram from Philander Colutius, *Theatrum naturae* (Speyer: Matthaeus Buschweiler, 1611) where quotes from Aristotle on prime matter and the levels of the soul are inscribed in the arcades of an amphitheatre. On the foreground steps busts of the philosophers are flanked by a *persona* inscribed *forma* and a skull labelled *privatio*.

64 *Pro suo de eloquentia theatro ad Gallos oratio* (Venice: Samoschi, 1587), 40, quoted in Bolzoni, *Stanza*, 161, 182, n. 58. Camillo compares the divine spirit which inspires men to the 'humour' which nourishes the flowers and meadows painted in their varied colours.

65 Idem., 154–64. Dramatic and mnemonic uses of *imagines agentes* appear with Giovanni Battista Della Porta who used theatre as one form of visual language whose symbolic manifestations he studied in ciphers and physiognomy; he called his *Fisionomia* a window opened on the heart, which could make the internal visible. Della Porta described *imagines agentes* as images of people, to be dressed, positioned, contemplated and touched like figures on a stage; he speaks of his memory figures standing with backs against a wall and arms hanging down at the beginning of a memory 'spectacle', before they start to act. Thus a narrative could be visualised as a drama and reduced to a series of images in which every iconic, gestural, physiognomic and 'hieroglyphic' detail can be read. Della Porta uses Quintilian XI and transcribes passages from Alberti's *De Pictura* as an aid in the construction of *imagines*; see Bolzoni, *Stanza* 164–75. In "Retorica, teatro, iconologia nell'arte della memoria" in *Giovanni Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo tempo*, ed. Maurizio Torrini (Naples: Guida, 1990), 341–371, Bolzoni discusses the literary and

perceived when he used Camillo as a model, this is an argument which exploits the affective, transformative character of images as phantasms and provides an encyclopaedic schema to contain them.⁶⁶

The closed structure of the theatre as an instrument whose principles are immanent meant that Camillo's theatre could be erected and dismantled in various places (Venice, France) without a change of significance. This is important, given the architectural term used to designate it, which should imply questions of civic setting. This can alert us to the ways that theatre is conceived in the sixteenth century—its congeniality as a means of cultural designing, suited to the conditions of *renovatio*, can turn into a more self-contained model whose solutions obtain irrespective of the particularity of conditions because they are inherent in the structure of the representation.

Literary Topics after Camillo

Camillo's topical methods were applauded by so subtle a commentator as Tasso although his diffuse influence on subsequent Italian literary theory and its interaction with other topical models (Agricola, Ramus) in Cinquecento poetics has still to be explored fully.⁶⁷ Topical analysis finds numerous applications in Cinquecento literary criticism, such as Minturno's *Arte Poetica* (1563), the commentaries of Bernardino Parthenio on Horace (1584), of Francesco Porto on Pindar (1583), in the Platonic *Poetica* of Francesco Patrizi (1581–86), in the lecture courses of Robortello and the works of Orazio Toscanella discussed by Bolzoni or in the *Inferno* commentaries of Castelvetro.⁶⁸

mythological traditions as providing the network of signs and associations which physiognomy and iconology reveal, and which serve as topical sources for invention.

- 66 Lomazzo acknowledges Camillo as a model at the opening of *Idea* Chapter 9; Klein in his edition of Lomazzo's *Idea del tempio della pittura* (Florence: Istituto nazionale di studi sul rinascimento, 1974), II, 474, n. 3, notes that a Milanese contemporary of Lomazzo's, Pomponio Mela, had Camillo's theatre painted in his villa. Lomazzo also refers to Camillo at *Trattato*, VII.2 (*Scritti*, II, 462), in description of the Sepirot.
- 67 See Tasso, *La Cavaletta overo della poesia toscana* (*Opere minori*, Florence: Salani, 1963), 555. Bolzoni, *La stanza*, 36ff. discusses various 'wheels' derived from Camillo's "Gorgo" by Denores, Castelvetro and Orazio Toscanella, whose four wheels in *Armonia di tutti i principi retori*, 1569, corresponding to nine ontological classes of subject, absolute predicates, relations and questions (i.e. categories), reflects clearly its Lullian origins.
- 68 See Bolzoni, *La stanza*, 27–31, 46–48, 55–73, 210–12 et passim, on Robortello's topical epitomes of his lecture courses, on Castelvetro's use of diagrams and Toscanella's use of topical schema, indebted to Agricola and Camillo. Toscanella produced a Tuscan translation of Agricola, *Della inventione dialettica* (Venice: Giovanni Barileto, 1567). Camillo's *Topica* is named by Patrizi as the source of the topical model for the discovery of the *mirabile* in

Toscanella's *Bellezze del Furioso* exhibits the topical break-down of Ariosto's romance, which had already attracted swollen indexes listing 'places' for arguments on various themes.⁶⁹ Presenting his work as an addition to the commentaries of the *poligrafi* Dolce, Ruscelli, Porcacchi, Fornari, Francesco Sansovino and Clemente Valvassore, Toscanella concentrates on the "artificij e bellezze" of the poem, as the most useful, important and necessary part of poetry for readers and aspiring poets.⁷⁰ Toscanella illustrates a new conception of the poem as source of encyclopaedic knowledge; he provides detailed information but the poem is a mode of discourse, analysed by topical means, as much as a source of information. Toscanella refers repeatedly to Camillo's *Idea del theatro* and *Topica*; like Doni, he sees Camillo as a source for iconographic inventions.⁷¹ Camillo's quasi-magical view of language as a system of cyphers which enter into correspondence with other symbol systems appears in Toscanella's quotation of Camillo's rebus, numerological and anagram exercises.

Parthenio's Horace commentary illustrates topical analysis in poetics. It neglects the moral sentence of the *Odes*; its stated aim in the dedication to Accademia Olimpica, Vicenza is to show the artifice of words and *sententiae*. Parthenio speaks of imitation as the end of his commentaries, describing the "more learned" manner of commentary as that which concerns the

the third book of the *Della Poetica*, *La deca ammirata*. Only the first two books of *Della poetica*, *La deca istoriale* and *La deca disputata* were published in Patrizi's lifetime, both in 1586, while the remaining five books remained in manuscript until the 1969 edition. On *Della Poetica*, see Barbagli-Aguzzi, "Poetry and Humanism" in *Renaissance Humanism* III, ed. Albert Rabil (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1988), 85–169.

69 On the *Orlando Furioso* publishing boom (approximately one hundred thousand copies printed 1542–51), see Antonio Panizzi in *Bibliographical Notices of Some Early Editions of Orlando Innamorato and Furioso* (London, William Pickering, 1831), 74–5; Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

70 *Bellezze*, 6r. Toscanella also mentions Robortello as a source for his ordering of figures (*OF* xxxix.39). See commentary on *OF* vi.20, vii.11 on Alcina and her isle, which follows a sequence of loci and the topoi used to describe them. Commentary on *OF* vii.56 has lists of topics from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

71 See commentary on *OF* vi.17, viii.38, xxiii.5, xxiii.50. In commentary on *OF* xxiii.23, Toscanella quotes an "invention by Aeschines" from his *Genius*, supposedly used in the "first locus of Camillo's theatre", consisting of a rebus "tree" inscribed "Morte" (*Bellezze*, 190–91)—the diagram appears also in Doni's manuscript version of *Pitture*. See Bolzoni, *Stanza*, 210–12, on Toscanella's commentaries as reducing Ariosto's poem to a series of images derived from Camillo's theatre or from works he supposedly saw in the private collection of François I; the "Morte" rebus derived from a Camillo manuscript in the library of Cardinal Jean de Lorraine.

poet's transformation (enlargement, amplification and adornment) of his naked argument (*sententia*) by means of loci or topics and figures.⁷² Parthenio calls the argument a “naked” and “rude” *sententia*, but since a *sententia* is an ornament of thought, poetry is conceived here as double ornamentation—of thought and of speech. He criticises Scaliger's complaint that Horace keeps dressing the same *sententia* in different words—for Parthenio this is the greatest praise of Horace's eloquence.⁷³ Parthenio reads the odes as patterns of figurative manipulation, to which questions of content are secondary. Metre receives little attention, as he declares that the poet's praise lies in figures and loci, not in syllables or feet.

Parthenio's topical preoccupations lead him to privilege figures which lend themselves to topical analysis, such as metonymy, rather than figures we might associate with Horace, such as irony.⁷⁴ His defence of Horace for reworking the same theme in different figures suggests Erasmus' guidelines for creating *copia* and brevity, which Parthenio associates with metonymy of species for genus and genus for species. His commentaries also show how such guidelines could lead to abuse, as Erasmus critiqued Ciceronianism as a gorgeous costume into which a wax doll is inserted by way of argument.⁷⁵ Parthenio refers to authors associated with topical invention—Hermogenes, Agricola, George of Trebizond and Castelvetro, but turns the resources of invention to the goal of figurative transmutation or manipulation at the expense of questions of meaning.⁷⁶

The disappearance of meaning in the display of language's plasmatic capacities did not appear to concern Camillo, with his magical, transformative vision of language. For Camillo, this transformative structure places language in analogy with alchemy (transformation of nature) and *deificatio*, the soul's transformation into the divine.⁷⁷ In *De transmutatione* he compares *deificatio* with

72 *In Horatii Flaccii Carmina atque Epodos Commentarii quibus Poetae artificium, et via ad imitationem, atque ad Poetice scribendum aperitur* (Venice: Nicolino, 1584), 3r, on Horace *Odes* 1.1.

73 *Ibid.*, iv–2r, 4v.

74 For figures drawn from ends and adjuncts, see commentary on *Odes* 1.1; the chariot gathering dust at the Olympic games is drawn from the “locus of adjuncts”, the granary at 1.9 as a periphrasis for agriculture is drawn “from ends”, *ibid.*, 3v. Landino also notes Horace's frequent use of metonymy.

75 Erasmus, *Collected Works* xxviii, *Ciceronianus*, trans. Betty Knott (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 354.

76 Parthenio discusses Camillo in *Della imitatione poetica*.

77 The analogy between the purification of the soul as it rises from matter to the purification of gold from “earthy particles” occurs in *Enneads* i.vi.5.

eloquence which shows “eternity in words that seem fallen” and the alchemical transmutation of “*materia prima* in the pristine state in which it was before the fall of Adam”, to which it will return after the Last Judgement.⁷⁸

Ciceronianism and Stylistic Surface

Camillo was grouped by Erasmus with other advocates of excessive Ciceronianism, the exaltation of Cicero as outstanding or exclusive model of Latinity.⁷⁹ Debates concerning the imitation of Cicero go back to antiquity and reappear with the Humanists, from the virulent exchange between Poggio Bracciolini and Lorenzo Valla over the latter’s esteem for Quintilian to the more temperate letters on imitation between Paolo Cortesi and Poliziano and Bembo and Gianfrancesco Pico.⁸⁰ Ciceronianism appears initially in Italy, as evinced by Erasmus’ caricature of the Roman Ciceronians, but his *Ciceronianus* (1528) provoked international debate, with angry responses from Budé, Scaliger and Vives.

Erasmus caricatures excessive Ciceronianism as the systematization of classical eloquence into a taxonomy of locutions which disregards questions of usage. Nosoponus, Erasmus’s caricature Ciceronian, shuns conversation, and repeats only a few ready-made phrases when forced to speak to others; his obsessive listing of Cicero’s figures of style ignores that *ornatus* responds to the

78 Camillo, *De transmutatione*, quoted in Vasoli, “L’art transmutatoire”, 201: “Laude della transmutazione divina, per la quale l’uomo diventa Dio esso . . . Laude della transmutazione dell’eloquenza, la qual nelle parole, che paiono caduche, fa vedere . . . eternità . . . Laude della transmutazione naturale, la qual cosa . . . può sola meter . . . la materia prima nel stato inocentissimo nel quale era avanti il peccato di Adamo, et nel quale si si ritroverà doppo che tutte le impurità saranno consumate nel fuoco del divino giudizio”.

79 In his letter of 28 March 1528 to Erasmus, Viglius says Camillo and his project exemplify “your Nosoponus”, alluding to Erasmus’ caricature of extreme Ciceronianism.

80 See Izora Scott, *Controversies over the imitation of Cicero as a Model for Style and some Phases of their Influence on the Schools of the Renaissance* (New York: New York Teachers College, Columbia University, 1910); John D’Amico, *Renaissance humanism in papal Rome: humanists and churchmen on the eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 123–43; Bolzoni, “Erasmus e Camillo: Il dibattito sull’imitazione” *Filologia antica e moderna* 4 (1992), 69–114; Martin McLaughlin, *Literary imitation in the Italian Renaissance: the theory and practice of literary imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 202–68; Thomas M. Greene, *The light in Troy: imitation and discovery in Renaissance poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 149–96.

unique demands of each situation. Thus manuals of rhetoric repeatedly state that a virtue of figures of speech (especially, metaphor) is to express things for which no ready word exists.

Mechanical practices of replication (not just stylistic movements such as Ciceronianism or Euphuism) weaken the vital link between ornament and situation or *usus*, as the Ciceronian movement which ostensibly claims to recover the glories of eloquence is founded on the fissure of form from content.⁸¹ Erasmus examines the consequences of this fissure in his satires and polemics against abuse of power—especially ecclesiastical power, with its display of regalia as an “inverse Silenus”—a gorgeous exterior masking a vile essence.⁸² The perversion of decorum and of ethics flows from the dislocation of inner and outer, aggravated by the tension between revived classical forms and Christian reference; Erasmus detects Paganism in the Roman Ciceronians, who despise ecclesiastical Latin as non-classical and “have Jesus on our lips but . . . Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Romulus in our heart.”⁸³

Rigid Ciceronianism is seen as a splendid costume with a wax model inside, or a cosmetic style born from the skin, with quotations sprinkled like a whiff of perfume over the bystanders.⁸⁴ By contrast, Erasmus's conception of varied *imitatio* as “born out of a speaker's person” is expressed by the Horatian topos of the bee (*Odes* IV.2) which distils the nectar gathered from many flowers within its own body to create a substance that unites the virtues of many things into a new and special sweetness, just as each writer absorbs a unique diet into the “veins of the mind” (in *vaenas animi*).⁸⁵ The bee gives nourishment and pleasure to others who feed upon its honey as it had feasted upon the nectar of many flowers. Erasmus does not explore the possibility that eclectic imitation, too, may become preoccupied with images of its own artifice, as we have seen in the fascination with garland and mosaic topoi.

Erasmus draws on other uses of the bee as a positive image for transformative imitation, in Seneca and notably in Petrarch's letters to Boccaccio

81 Walter Ong would have added to such mechanical replications printing itself, which he sees as fundamental to the intellectual project of Ramus.

82 See “Sileni Alciabidis”, *Adagia* III.3.1, in Erasmus, *Collected Works* XXXIV, 262–82, and *Moriae Encomium* (1509).

83 *Ciceronianus*, 394.

84 *Ibid.*, 401.

85 *Ibid.*, 402. Horace contrasts the diligence of the small bee with the hubris of the ambitious imitator of the “swan” Pindar who will make a flight like Icarus. This however implies that Pindar is a Daedalus who has flown on wings made with studied art, while the bee in its Tiburtine groves recalls *Ion* 533e–534b on the poet as bee in the garden of the Muses which is both sacred and airy or fleeting, suited to non-epic genre of lyric.

and Tommaso da Messina (*Familiares* 1.8, XXII.2, XXIII.19).⁸⁶ In *Fam.* 1.8 the metaphor of the flowers and the bee derives from Seneca (*Epistle* 84) and Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1, preface 5–6; in *Fam.* XXIII.19 the resemblance between source and imitation should be that of father and son, not of sitter and portrait. Petrarch illustrates the resemblance with the term *aria*, which he notes is an artist's term, raising the question of the status he does accord the portrait. In *Fam.* XXII.2 Petrarch speaks of the absorption of texts which we know best (Virgil, Horace, Boethius, Cicero) so that they sink into the marrow and offer themselves like our own thoughts.⁸⁷ Style is not a robing of oneself in another's clothes, as the actor changes dress: if there is imitation, let it be like the bee's creation of one thing from many varied things.⁸⁸

The bee topos leads into the images of speech which swells up from the heart of the speaker, or which lives, breathes and moves because it is integral to the speaker, reflecting the features of the mind as a mirror reflects those of the face. Style in short becomes personal expression—which can however transform itself to suit the demands of each context. Here the Protean potential of the endless transformations charted in *De copia* is anchored to an idea of consistency in diversity that recalls the *convenientia* of *De officiis*.

The Ciceronian debates return to the negative images for the abuse of ornament, as cosmetics, as an image for affectation or disguise, or the elaboration of gorgeous but ineffectual objects.⁸⁹ Cicero contrasts health to cosmetics and Quintilian repeats contrasts between proper, virile ornament (the athletic body, well wielded arms) and effeminacy.⁹⁰

86 Lucretius uses the bee as an image for the Epicureans' study (and absorption) of their master's works (*De rerum natura* III.10–13). Erasmus does not use Lucretius in the *Adagia*. See Mann, *Petrarch*, 20–21, on Petrarch's emulative attitude to Valerius Maximus in *Rerum memorandarum libri*, to Livy in *De viris illustribus*, and to Virgil in *Africa*.

87 Petrarch, *Fam.* XXII.2.12–13, "non modo memorie sed medullis affixa sunt unumque cum ingenio facta sunt meo".

88 *ibid.*, ll.16–17.

89 See Quintilian X.1.30 for the metaphor of the golden sword as a useless luxury object which fails to serve its possessor, or is even a source of risk.

90 On cosmetics, see Cicero, *Brutus* 9.36; on effeminacy and inappropriate luxury, Quintilian VIII, preface 18–20, VIII.3.7, XI.1.3. Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 464b–465d on the true arts of justice, legislation, medicine and gymnastic versus the false techniques of rhetoric, sophistry, cookery and cosmetics.

False Paradises and Sophistry

This brings us to the association between abuse of ornament and the seduction of the cosmetic, envisaged as entrapment by (false) female charms. The theme appears at the dawn of rhetoric, as Gorgias selects Helen to explore the seductive nature of adorned speech. The association of erotic entrapment with a *locus amoenus* is more ancient still, in the imprisoning bower of Calypso, the witch-goddess Circe or the Sirens of the *Odyssey*. The transformation of the locus into a *topographia*, the qualities of the garden as habitat (tempered conditions and perpetual springtime) and the relation of girl and flower are established in antiquity.⁹¹

The classical topoi of the garden, as place of reward, identification with the blessed isles, Golden Age or Elysium, are reused by Christian authors, such as Prudentius on the golden age with the coming of Christ (*Contra Symmachum* 2).⁹² Above all, description of Eden, a place of delight and contemplation, as Philo said, required display of poetic ornament in the description of the *exornatio mundi*. Bartlett Giamatti noted that Christian set-pieces of *topographia* in Sidonius Apollinaris, Ennodius, Dracontius, Lactantius, Alcimus Avitus and Prudentius often exhibited a rich, ornate style, with flower lists and serpentine syntax.⁹³

The paradisiacal garden as site of literary preciousness has sophistic associations, although its origins are still older; when it is a place of erotic delight the related themes of illusion and deceit frequently appear.⁹⁴ Claudian in

91 See A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); on the garden as topos, Comito, *Idea of the Garden*. For the garden as a set piece in Greek romance, see Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 4.2; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.15; the tenth century *Geoponica* 3.13; 10.1; 11.23. On girl and flower, see *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 5–14; Catullus, *Epithalamium* 62.39–47, derived from Sappho; Claudian, *Epithalamium de Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*. Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 41–42, notes the harmony between surroundings and the temperament of the inhabitant in Horace and cites Ovid, *Fasti* v.315–24, on Flora who lets her garden decay as she is ignored by the Senate.

92 See inter alia Calpurnius, *Eclogues*, 2.75ff; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.89–112; *Fasti* v.195–210 on Chloris-Flora who dwelt in the Fortunate Isles before Zephyr abducted her and placed her in a garden; Virgil, *Aeneid* vi.638–65; pseudo-Virgil, *Aetna* 9–16; Servius, *In Aen.* vi.638–40 on identification of Elysium with the Isles of the Blest. See Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 14–46, for discussion.

93 Ibid., 68–81; cf. Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 132, on Dracontius.

94 In *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 9–16, the earth flowers prodigiously at Zeus' will to entice Persephone and the earth yawns opens as she bends to gather a flower.

De nuptiis delineates a false paradise with a poisonous fountain of love and allegories representing negative emotions. In the garden as *natura artificiosa* the theme of deceiving illusion also concerns the old praise of art's ability to correct nature's defects.⁹⁵ The false paradise gains greater definition once pitted against true paradise, as in the *Roman de la Rose* with its contrast between the garden populated with personified vices and Shepherd's Park.⁹⁶ It receives memorable development in Petrarch, in Poliziano and in Renaissance epics and romances by Trissino, Ariosto, Tasso and Spenser, where it is designed to subvert or destroy heroic action. The presiding enchantresses are unmasked, sometimes brutally, by the entry of virtuous warriors who release the imprisoned hero.⁹⁷ A further case—the *Hypnerotomachia*—is treated separately below. The false paradises of Renaissance romance show the *locus amoenus* as an epideictic set piece which vies with its sources—and which exhibits anxieties about the sophistic character of artifice.

The Renaissance false paradise also draws on the recovery of classical representations of *otium* in the villa or pleasant place as a scene of intellectual recreation—notably in *Phaedrus* and Cicero. Humanist versions of this idyll appear in the notion of poetic retreat promoted by Petrarch and Boccaccio or in the reciprocity of active life and its reward in suburban repose delineated in Alberti's account of the *hortus*. The topical articulation we described in the villa or garden, where the décor serves to highlight and 'turn' points of discussion is absent from the false paradise, under female dominion, where intellectual

95 For a Renaissance restatement, see Philip Sidney's contrast between the "brazen" world of nature with the "golden" world of poetry, created by the poet "freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit", *The Defence of Poesy* in *Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. K. Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 216.

96 Spenser's *Faerie Queene* has a sequence of sites dedicated to Venus or Nature (Garden of Adonis, Temple of Venus, Arlo Hill) versus gardens and palaces where love as debasement or fantasy is enacted (Bower of Blisse, House of Busyrane).

97 The most violent overthrow comes in the Bower of Blisse (*Faerie Queene* 11.12), where the bower is broken and defaced. Trissino's exposure of Acratia in *Italia liberata dai Goti* involves a crude disrobing of the enchantress; for discussion, see Nohnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene*, 499–500. Space precludes discussion of the series of fake or replicant females in the *Faerie Queene* who elaborate the association of the female with deceiving external appearance. One of these, the counterfeit "False Florimell", is a 'sprite' embodied in an artificial body constructed from materializations of the topoi of Petrarchan love poetry: black coals for eyes, gold wire for hair, etc.

or spiritual repose is parodied in erotic enervation, indolence and narcissism.⁹⁸ The enchantresses are parodies of Venus as Nature or genetrix who creates *ornatus mundi* and of the aristocratic ladies who moderate urbane *ragionamenti* in the *Decameron* or Bembo's *Gli Asolani*; Venus negatively regarded presides over a realm of luxury where artifice tinges nature with deceit. This realm is transformed into a psychological landscape in which the lover's torments are confused with the habitat.⁹⁹ The architecture allegorises emotional states: already in Petrarch's *Triumphus Cupidinis* 4.139–41 there is a triumphal arch adorned with the phantasmagoria of love's torments:

Errori e sogni et imagini smorte
 eran d'intorno a l'arco triunfale,
 e false opinïoni in su le porte.

Here we see an early—or first—case of the use of the triumphal arch as a support for images which illustrate a topic, a decorative mode which will have immense subsequent success.

Poliziano's account of the realm of Venus in the *Stanze per la giostra* 1.70–125 continues the theme of deceiving Venus with décor developed from Claudian's *De nuptiis*. The eternally flowering garden with its amorous animals is peopled by sinister personifications of love's pains and illusions; the doors with their precious stones and reliefs show the kind of myths condemned by Socrates in *Republic* 3 for their degrading effects (Gigantomachy, castration of Uranus, loves of the gods). The superb *ekphrasis* of the doors includes the description of sea-born Aphrodite which Botticelli would depict in the *Birth of Venus*.

The Garden of Alcina (*Orlando Furioso* VI–VII) is a grotesque materialization of the Petrarchan locus, where Alcina transforms her rejected lovers into

98 On indolence in the garden, see *Orlando Furioso* VII.41 on the loss of fame in passing life as the lover of an enchantress. Beatrice's accusation in the Earthly Paradise (*Purgatorio* xxx.118–20) that Dante squandered his talents uses the simile of the garden as a place where one's gifts are wasted—rich soil, badly cultivated, becomes all the more choked with weeds; see Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, 112. Venus' island in Petrarch's *Triumph of Love* is a dark, narrow prison “tenebrosa e stretta gabbia” (*Triumphus cupidinis* 4.157), whose apparent delights destroy all virile virtue (“ch'ogni maschio pensier de l'alma tolle”, *ibid.*, 4.105).

99 In parody of the super-natural climate of the paradisaical place, see Cytherea in Petrarch's *Triumphs*, which produces roses in winter, ice in summer, like the fire and ice of the lover's desires (*Triumphus cupidinis* 4.117).

trees, fountains and animals.¹⁰⁰ The metaphor as *integumentum* in 'theological' poetry, whereby appearances in the earthly paradise veil higher realities, becomes in the false paradise the concealing-revealing play of the female body, glimpsed through diaphanous drapery or fountains. The veils can also be enticing surfaces masking ugliness or nothingness; they half-show what appears to be real and instead mask an illusion.¹⁰¹ They mock the success of the erotic, insubstantial nymph as a key figure for repossessing the loveliness of antiquity—a figure central to Renaissance collections of ancient statuary, often installed in a nymph fountain. They may also reflect preoccupation with the surface of speech, or on surface ornament, which became so important in stylistic debates such as Ciceronianism.

The false paradises are products of an association which appears in Gorgias' *Helen*; the link between the psychagogic force of speech and the enchantments of magic.¹⁰² Alcina's city is created by alchemy, but shines like gold; the eye cannot tell if the lovely frieze at her gates is true or false.¹⁰³ The transformative, embellishing character of the false paradise is an image for the art of poetry, which creates appearances; at Alcina's banquet entertainers "con invenzioni e poesie/rappresentasse grate fantasie" (VII.19.7–8). The false paradises are indeed virtuoso passages of intertextuality and *imitatio*, as elaborate as the architecture they describe. They often eclipse the description of their 'virtuous' counterparts; Alcina's sinister grove is more memorable than Logistilla's tended gardens.¹⁰⁴

The false paradise created by 'magical' transformation in language can also be metamorphosed, like Antonio Fregoso's Palace of Fortune (*Dialogo de Fortuna*, 1507), whose superb architecture is revealed to be mud and smoke and

100 On the Alcina-Logistilla episode, see Albert Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: crisis and evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 121–257, esp. 126–27, on Alcina as a figure for the seductive, metamorphic character of Ariosto's work. Cf. Attilio Momigliano, *Saggio su l' 'Orlando furioso'* (Bari: Laterza, 1967), 7–50, on the palace of illusion of the magician Atlante (OF XII), where all follow figments of their fantasy, as an image for the poem.

101 For the veils worn by enchantresses, see *Orlando Furioso* VII.28; *Gerusalemme Liberata* XVI.18.1; *Faerie Queene* II.12.77. For the revealing of Venus in a fountain as a sexual ritual, see *Hypnerotomachia* 23v (ed. Pozzi and Ciapponi, I, 360). See Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, for discussion of these passages, and on the veiling theme in Milton's description of Eve covered by her hair.

102 *Helen* 10. See Momigliano, *Saggio*, 8–9, on the fluid movement of *Orlando Furioso* as the rhythm of the fantasy.

103 *Orlando Furioso* VI.59, VI.71.

104 Momigliano, *Saggio*, 42.

mist, with inhabitants who undergo monstrous metamorphoses.¹⁰⁵ Fregoso's Castle reworks features of the realm of a malicious Venus in the *Triumph* and the *Stanze* (triumphal arch, pageant of vices and suffering) and reiterates the topoi of a sophistic art which mixes truth and falsehood.¹⁰⁶ The passages are overtly fantastic in their play with dematerialization of objects but they also suggest a kind of transmutation which could result from topical variation in the literary theory of Camillo, with its 'alchemical' model.

The false paradises in Renaissance romance thus appear to reflect the revival of old sophistic concepts of art and the attractions and anxieties which they carried. These include replacement of reality by appearances, the role of fantasy in creating illusion, false means of persuasion, links between persuasion and witchery, artifice creating the illusion of life and ornate, precious style based on study of other literature. The fissure between representational surface and content long associated with sophistry found a new model in stylistic movements such as Ciceronianism and a new instrument in topical invention, with its potential to cosmetic repletion through figural elaboration.

Tasso links sophistry, the *ninfale* and discourse analysis in the *Allegoria del poema* (1576), in defence of *Gerusalemme Liberata* when he calls flowers, fountains, brooks, musical instruments, and nymphs fallacious syllogisms, which place before us images of ease and delights of the sense, under appearance of the good.¹⁰⁷ The *Allegoria* commences with moral types but turns to allegories for kinds of argument, reflecting the discursive preoccupations of later Cinquecento poetics.

We have seen that a literary culture based on *imitatio* privileges the *ornamenta dicendi* as a means of textual transfer and turns objects of representation into works of precious artifice. The fake fruits and illusionist details in which false paradises abound illustrate the way that an art based on art supplants realities with its own realm of simulacra. Tasso makes the point clearly as his unmanned hero lies enthralled by his image in a mirror held by the enchantress Armida (*Gerusalemme Liberata* xvi). The knightly rescue party

105 Fregoso, *Dialogo di Fortuna*, in *Opere*, ed. Giorgio Dilemmi (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1976) 88–128. On Milton's use of Fregoso in the description of Pandaemonium, whose gorgeous buildings transmute to a bee-hive with insect-like fallen angels, see R. Eriksen, "Narrating the scene of speaking: generic instability in *Paradise Lost* Book 1", in *The Formation of the Genera in Early Modern Culture*, ed. C.L. Guest (Fabrizio Serra: Pisa, 2009), 79–100.

106 *Dialogo di Fortuna*, Chap. 13, ll.46–48 on the false which appears true; Chap. 17, ll.6–7 where the monstrous transformations 'seen' by the poet appear like lies, but are 'true'.

107 *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Genoa: Bartoli, 1590), †1r–†2v.

is not just the overthrow of feminine deceit by manly vigour, but also signifies the re-assertion of *praxis* as the proper subject of art. Unlike the purple passages, with mythological scenes and locus amoenus, criticised by Horace in *Ars poetica* 14–19 as a facile means of achieving ornament, the false paradises of romance display a replete representational surface where ornament as sensual beauty replaces its illumination of virtue.¹⁰⁸ Heroism is smothered by the luxuriance of an ornament which becomes self-engrossed, usurping the activity of virtuous action with the *enargeia* of artifice.

Ornament in false paradises is a covering which stifles, rather than conveys its content. For the opponents of Ciceronianism it acted thus, promoting adherence to an illustrious model over adaptation of speech to circumstances. The false paradise also offers unchanging artifice as a substitute for the cyclical renewal of nature or the historical nature of human experience within the larger narrative of providence. This leaves the question of how imitation of antique idylls can go beyond surface artifice and how occasions for virtuous action fit into the universal context. The second question is best explored through Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano* (1528), where women preside in a situation where active life is deferred by misfortune, becoming central to the idealisation of a continuum of graceful artifice.¹⁰⁹

Castiglione: Artifice and Grace

In the previous section we saw ornament increasingly identified with the surface of representation where the content is played out or 'figured forth'. In Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* the synthesis of a style from varied sources which communicates and shapes itself to all utterance is taken further, into grace as gesture and emanation.¹¹⁰ Castiglione reworks Quintilian's references

108 The Horatian passage is glossed in Robortello's 1548 commentary.

109 Active life is frustrated through exile (Magnifico Giuliano, son of Lorenzo de' Medici and future Duke of Nemours) or illness (Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, notably absent from the conversations). Exile as enforced *otium* used virtuously in intellectual reflection has an obvious precedent in Cicero.

110 See the fully annotated edition of Cian (Florence: Sansoni, 1947). On the text, Castiglione's use of Latin sketches and his veiling of sources in progressive redactions, see Vittorio Cian, *La lingua di Baldassare Castiglione* (Florence: Sansoni 1942); Ghino Ghinassi, *La seconda redazione del Cortegiano di Baldassarre Castiglione* (Florence: Sansoni, 1968); Uberto Motta, *Castiglione e il mito di Urbino* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero Università, 2003); Olga Zorzi Pugliese, *Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (Il libro del cortegiano): a Classic in the Making* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2008); Motta, 237–40, 318–21

to the decorum of *actio* as *gratia* and to art hiding art as he renovates the patrician *honestum otium* of *De oratore*.¹¹¹ His focus on the analogy between universal and artificial ordering makes the *Cortegiano* a forerunner of Cinquecento art theories that locate artifice within larger psychologies and metaphysics concerning the formation of ideas from sensory particulars. The *Cortegiano* insists on *varietas* as central to this analogy; like Alberti's conception of *varietas*, Castiglione works with the notion of harmonious juxtaposition of contraries.¹¹² This is thematised in Castiglione's major distinction from his classical sources—the presence of women in his portrait of ideal court life.¹¹³

Castiglione's inclusion of women in a series of courtly dialogues on love recalls other works in the *volgare*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, with its "piacevoli ragionamenti", dances and songs presided over by a "king" or "queen", and—

on Castiglione's reworking of *Brutus* 1–9 in *Il libro* I.1 and *De oratore* III.1.1–4.16 at IV.1. On reception, see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1996); Quondam, *Questo povero Cortegiano*.

- 111 Quintilian, IV.1.58, 116. Cf. *ibid.*, IX.3. 102 "ubique ars ostendatur, veritas abesse videatur"; *ibid.*, IV.1.57, "videamur accurate non callide dicere"; *ibid.*, IV.2.126, "desinat ars esse, si apparet". Quintilian praises Cicero's *ars occulta*; Castiglione's discussion at I.19–28 of *disinvoltura* and *sprezzatura* derives from Cicero's description of Attic style in *Orator* 23.75ff. On art hiding art, see Ovid, *Met.*, x.252, "ars adeo latet arte sua"; *Ars amat.*, II.13, "ars est celare artem". Gracián in *El Héroe* (1637) glosses *sprezzatura* as "una cierta airosidad", in Ossola, *Povero cortegiano*, 11.
- 112 See *De re aed.*, I.9 for the musical analogy concerning qualities (acute/ grave); in *De pictura* II.40, *copia* involves variety of species and qualities (men, women, animals, young, old) while *varietas* is discussed in terms of posture and movement ("corporum status atque motus"). Pugliese notes the "fundamental principle of harmonious contrariness on which Castiglione builds his dialogic text" (*Castiglione*, 71), although the word dialogue occurs only at III.52, in reference to the Canticle, called a *dialogo* between a lady and a lover (*ibid.*, 51); cf. Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue: literary dialogue in its social and political contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 49, 59, on Castiglione's "genuinely dialogical" use of dialogue to avoid relativism. Pugliese notes that early redactions show fiercer military and legal disputes between the speakers (*Castiglione*, 107ff.).
- 113 On Castiglione's presentation of women, see Harry Berger Jr, *The Absence of Grace: sprezzatura and suspicion in two Renaissance courtesy books* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Pugliese, *Castiglione*, 275–360, on the changing treatment of women in progressive redactions. On the treatment of women as emblematic for the ideological differences and for the functioning of the court, see Antonio Gagliardi, *La misura e la grazia: sul Libro del Cortegiano* (Torino: Tirrenia Stampatori, 1989), 105–06, 116.

closer in time, setting and theme—Bembo's *Gli Asolani* (first edition 1505).¹¹⁴ The differences to *Gli Asolani* may be seen as part of Castiglione's distancing from Bembo's adherence to exclusive imitation.¹¹⁵ If women provide the other or contrary necessary to the creation of harmonious opposition, they also work in the *Cortegiano* as ornaments—adding beauty or grace, providing a fictional frame for courtly activities, representing the praise won by virtue and inspiring the love which reveals the emanation of divinity that underpins all order.¹¹⁶ Petrarchan themes, which associate female beauty with ornament as praise and as a 'light' leading to perception of transcendent emanation, come together with Ciceronian accounts of decorum as the performance of virtue, and its place in the universal order. In the first redaction of *Cortegiano* 1.1, Castiglione describes the *varietà* of the *ornatus mundi* with its stars, flowers, seasons, times and habitats, of the microcosm and of historical conditions as the context for his work of *cortegiania*.¹¹⁷

The theme of *varietà* appears in the cultivation of *sprezzatura*, the artifice of artlessness which, like literary *imitatio*, is distilled from the study of examples so that it seems to flow naturally from the virtues and shapes itself to each situation.¹¹⁸ The eclectic gathering of examples appears in the Horatian simile of the bee amongst flowers which Castiglione uses to describe the cultivation of character (1.26), and in the description of the *volgare* as "italiana commune, copiosa e varia, e quasi come un delizioso giardino pien di fiori e frutti" (1.35).¹¹⁹

114 See Motta, *Castiglione*, 154–60; Pugliese, *Castiglione*, 90–91, notes that Castiglione calls Emilia Pia "regina" in Manuscript B (Vat. Lat. 8204).

115 Castiglione's divergence from Bembo on the *questione della lingua* appears in the dedication to Michel de Silva where he rejects Boccaccio as a model for Italian prose. Bembo is given a minor role in the discussions on language and style in Book 1, despite his fame as an editor and grammarian.

116 On the framing devices in Castiglione, such as the prologues, see Motta, *Castiglione*, 24ff; Wayne Rebhorn, *Courtly Performances. Masking and Festivity in Castiglione's Book of the Courtier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978, 91–94); Carlo Ossola, "Il libro del cortegiano": cornice e ritratto, in *Dal Cortegiano all' Uomo di mondo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 27–42.

117 First redaction, form α, Vat. Lat. 8204, 7r–12v, quoted and discussed in Motta, *Castiglione*, 37–44, who notes the echo of Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.28.68–70, where the creator is inferred from the beauty and perfection of creation, and man's centrality within it as guardian of the earth and contemplator of heaven.

118 For Castiglione's view of Erasmus, see Guido Rebecchini, "Castiglione and Erasmus: Towards a Reconciliation?", *JWCI* 61 (1998), 258–26.

119 *Il libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Amedeo Quondam (Milan: Garzanti, 1981), 76: "common Italian, copious and varied, almost like a delicious garden full of flowers and fruit". Cf. *ibid.*, 59: "E come la pecchia ne'verdi prati sempre tra 'l verde va carpando i fiori così il nostro

Castiglione also uses the related fable for eclectic imitation, the tale of Zeuxis and the maidens of Croton. Asked to paint an image of Helen of Troy for the city of Croton, Zeuxis studied the particular beauties of the girls of the city and from their best elements formed a composite, from which he could form an 'idea' for his image of Helen.¹²⁰ Castiglione cites the Zeuxis legend at I.53, in a long discussion of painting, with reference to the world as the God's "painting", called "variata", "ornata", "composta" and "laude".¹²¹ The universal order is invoked again at IV.58–59 with the same sequence of objects as in *De oratore* III.45.178–46.180—the heavens, the human body, trees and products of human art such as ships and buildings. The Zeuxis myth is not merely a topos for eclectic imitation; as Barkan and Gagliardi saw, it is central to the design technique of the work, becoming the "active myth for all its processes of idealization".¹²²

cortegiano averà da rubare questa grazia da que' che a lui parerà che la teghino e da ciascun quella parte che sarà più lodevole": "Like the bee in the verdant meadows which draws nectar from the flowers so our courtier will draw grace from whoever seems to him to have it and from each praiseworthy point". On the linguistic editing of the *Libro* by its Venetian editors in 1528, see Motta, *Castiglione*, 255 ff. Pugliese, *Castiglione*, 133–36, notes the reduction of multilingual (Latin and Spanish) phrases in the text in successive redactions. For Castiglione's position on Italian, see Cian, *La lingua*.

120 The fable appears in Cicero, *De inventione* 11.1; Pliny, *NH* xxxv.36.64 who says the image was of Hera for the city of Girgenti (Agrigento). See Leonard Barkan, "Heritage of Zeuxi" on varied Renaissance uses of the myth. Alberti regards Zeuxis as studying nature rather than trusting to his own talent; the letter attributed to Raphael or Aretino on Raphael's *Galatea* opposes models and the artist's 'idea'; Armenini reduces the topos to a blazon. Barkan discusses the opposition between proportion and modules—units that can be reassembled—in the Zeuxis fable. He also notes Pliny's critical portrayal of Zeuxis as boastfully confident in his powers of naturalism.

121 Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, I.49 "the structure of the world, which we see with the great expanse of heaven shining with stars and in the centre the earth bounded by the seas, with mountains, valleys and rivers in their variety, and so adorned with all kinds of trees and lovely flowers, can be called a great and noble picture, composed by God and the hand of nature; and whoever imitates it seems to me worthy of great praise": "la machina del mondo, che noi veggiamo coll'amplo cielo di chiare stelle tanto splendido e nel mezzo la terra dai mari cinta, di monti, valli e fiumi variata e di sì diversi alberi e vaghi fiori e d'erbe ornata, dir si po che una nobile e gran pittura sia, per man della natura e di Dio composta; la qual chi po imitare parmi esser di gran laude degno". Ficino discusses the "pittura del mondo" in his *Symposium* commentary 5.4, in an important chapter that stresses the role of vision and light as the condition of apprehension of the cosmic order.

122 Gagliardi, *Misura*, 71; Barkan, "Heritage", 107. Firenzuola reads the Zeuxis myth as a fable about scattered beauty and forms an ideal woman by combining the body parts of his female interlocutors but describes her as a "chimera"; see *Dialogo delle bellezze delle*

The Zeuxis myth also informs the great oration on love delivered by Bembo at the end of Book Four, based on Diotima's account of the ascent to intellectual beauty in *Symposium* 210a and Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deo*.¹²³ As in *Symposium*, the lover ascends from the contemplation of a single beautiful body to that of all bodies, prior to the abstraction into contemplation that culminates in ecstatic vision. In Castiglione the elaboration of all variety is a precondition of the synthesis into the *concetto universale*:

he will add gradually in his mind so many ornaments that gathering together all beauties he will make a universal concept [*concetto universale*] and will reduce this multitude to the unity which extends generally over all human nature; and so he will no longer regard the particular beauty of a single woman, but will contemplate the universal beauty that adorns all bodies.¹²⁴

The lover's variation of forms in his mind implies the role of the fantasy, a point without equivalent in Plato. The allusion to the *concetto universale*, which is a mental construct but not an immanent or transcendent form in the Platonic sense, also suggests that what is described owes much to Aristotelian accounts of psychological and thought process.¹²⁵ The two accounts seem to be conflated, so that we perceive the relationship between the formation of artistic forms and the soul's ascent to the *invisibilia*, described in the pseudo Dionysian language of light with reference to Bonaventure's traces of God (IV.68).

The parallel in Castiglione between ascent to the forms and the 'gathering' of varied artifice appears in a contemporary discussion of imitation, which also

donne in Ragionamenti d'amore e altri scritti, ed. Bartolomeo Rossetti (Roma: Avanzini e Torracca, 1966), 198, 224, 243, 246; Elizabeth Cropper, "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style", *The Art Bulletin*, 58, 3, (Sep., 1976), 374–394.

123 On Castiglione's development of the love theme from courtly to Neoplatonic, see Ghinassi, *Seconda redazione*, especially the discussions of Bembo's *Asolani* at III.105–6. On the disconnection of the love theme in Book Four from the rest of the work, see Piero Floriani, *Bembo e Castiglione: studi sul classicismo del Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1976); Pugliese, *Castiglione*, 47, on Burckhardt.

124 Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, IV.67: "aggiungerà nel pensier suo a poco a poco tanti ornamenti, che cumulando insieme tutte le bellezze farà un concetto universale e ridurrà la moltitudine d'esse alla unità di quella sola che generalmente sopra la umana natura si spande; e così non più la bellezza particular d'una donna, ma quella universale, che tutti i corpi adorna, contemplerà".

125 Gagliardi, *Misura*, 151–52, sees an Averroist content to the oration.

involved Bembo. This is *De imitatione* (1512), the epistolary exchange between Gianfrancesco Pico and Bembo. Pico opposes the formalism of Bembo's Ciceronianism to an eclectic imitation discussed in Quintilian, Poliziano and Erasmus.¹²⁶ Pico argues for eclectic imitation as evidence of an immanent, ineffable 'idea', using Cicero's allusion to the Platonic idea as the artist's concept in *Orator* 1.9 and Plotinus' tractate "On beauty" (*Enneads* 1.6) which considers judgement of beautiful things as derived from the immanence of the form of beauty in the soul.¹²⁷ For Gianfrancesco, this Platonic form justifies eclectic imitation, since the idea, as cause of the manifold beauty of sensible things, has the capacity to unify their diversity. Such a conception of the idea is particularly useful in discussions of genre, as we shall see. If the immanent form has never been perfectly reached, the attempt to approach it leads us to study the manifold so that it can lead us towards the simplicity of the idea. Thus Zeuxis is lauded for his prudence in refusing to identify beauty with a single female body. The idea may thus be approached, if not grasped in its essence, through time and the study of many authors.¹²⁸

Castiglione, like Gianfrancesco Pico, uses the fable of Zeuxis to link varied imitation with Platonism. This association is not surprising, given the Platonic background to many discussions of *exornatio mundi* and the analogies between artificer and demiurge made by the Neoplatonists. Unlike Gianfrancesco, Castiglione does not suggest an innate form of beauty in the soul; he describes instead the formation of the Aristotelian universal concept, as a synthesis of the multiple particulars grasped in sensory apprehension and varied in the fantasy. The role of the fantasy is indicated at IV.67 when the vision of "bellezza universale astratta e in se sola" requires purgation of the *fantasmi* which retain "convenienza . . . col corpo" in order to rise to intellectual contemplation. While ornament assists in the formation of the universal concept by allowing the imagination to gather all possible accidental variations, it works at the level of

126 On the Ciceronian debate, see n. 81; Luca D'Ascia, *Erasmus e l'Umanesimo romano* (Florence: Olschki, 1992); Eugenio Battistini, "Il concetto d'imitazione nel Cinquecento italiano", in *Rinascimento e Barocco* (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), 177–98.

127 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, v.8.1 on art as imitating logos.

128 Bembo doubted the innate nature of style, which he claimed only developed after long reading; he also claimed that since the divine ideas and images exist in God, a perfect image of correct writing must also exist, but this perfect image must be sought through the selection of the best and most illustrious model. Even Proteus, Bembo states, only showed one form at a time. (Scott, *Controversies*, 9–17). Bembo overlooks well-known Platonic sources, like the *Didaskalikos* or *Handbook of Platonism* 1x.2, which discounts the existence of transcendent forms of artificial things.

sensory perception. Ornament thus remains linked with the inner senses, from which our apprehensions of proportion and harmony derive.

Castiglione paves the way here for subsequent art criticism. The Zeuxis fable is especially pertinent for writers concerned with the perfect form of a class of things, as in Cicero's *Orator*, where the 'idea' is also called the "ultimate species of a genre" or Condivi's claim that Michelangelo loved every beautiful thing in its species.¹²⁹ In the figurative arts, this happens in accounts of *disegno* concerned with the representation of universal forms and in literature with the rise of genre criticism.¹³⁰ The universal forms are found through diligent study of varied particulars; they are also to be adorned with variety, in the form of decorous accidents. In this view, variety and ornament are essential to the process which produces universal forms; they are also adopted to diversify representations and set them out fittingly in their proper context.

In Aristotelian terms, the bee topos for imitation concerns substantial change (nectar to honey); the fable of Zeuxis concerns a change from primary to secondary substance, from particular women to the 'idea' of Helen as a specific form. Although both topoi concerned judgement, they were appropriate to different kinds of discussion; the bee to formation of coherent, individual style, the Zeuxis fable to questions of idealisation and philosophically grounded criticism. The honey image suggests the absorption of ornament into a quality of style, the Zeuxis myth its abstraction in the formation of universals.

Thus Castiglione's preference for eclectic imitation in the discussions on language in Book 1 is not only a stylistic choice; *varietas* in artifice provides an analogy for the formation of universal concepts. In placing the universal concept within an account of Platonic ascent, Castiglione invokes will and choice, i.e., moral dispositions not present in Aristotelian notions of concept formation.¹³¹ The analogies between moral action and artifice run through the work, as at II.7 artifice in the presentation of conduct is described as something like artful *chiaroscuro*:

let him so order the tenor of his life, that the whole corresponds to these parts, the same is always the same and he is in nothing in discord with himself, but makes a single body of these good conditions; so that every act is composed of all the virtues . . . so interlinked that they lead to one end and all can come together and serve each effect. He must however know how to make use of this, so that one virtue may be known better by

129 Barkan, "Heritage", 103.

130 See Chapter 7.

131 On the relation between historicity and ontology, see Gagliardi, *Misura*.

comparison and almost opposition with another, like good painters, who make lights stand out through the contrast of shadow, and so with light make shadows on surfaces seem more profound, or put colours together so that one shows the other better through variety, or place figures against one another which helps to express the painter's intention.¹³²

The passage draws on the discussion of decorum in *De officiis* as a harmonious 'body' whose proportion and *constantia* signals the concord of the virtues within the soul. Castiglione's comparison to painting—to the contrasts which enhance variety and to the effects of relief, recalls Dionysius of Halicarnassus' discussion of sophistic rhetoric. There is grace in the artifice created and in the manner of creation; given that the artifice in question is presentation of character, it requires some subtlety to distinguish the two. The universal order which is origin and paradigm for harmonious *varietà* in artistic arrangement is itself presented as a concatenation of contraries, a "concatenata contrarietà" in which virtues and vices alternate as opposites or counterweights, sustaining and fortifying one another through their growth and decay (11.2).¹³³

We saw the concept of the world as *concatenata contrarietà* in the pre-Socratic cosmos. Empedocles is cited by Pico in the commentary on Benivieni; in that work Pico defines beauty itself as *contrarietà unita, amicizia inimicizia* and *concorde discordia*, a formulation which stresses the gulf between the created and the creator above being.¹³⁴ This need not imply a quantitative

132 Cortegiano, 128: "il tenor della vita sua ordini con tal disposizion, che 'l tutto corrisponda a queste parti, e si veggia il medesimo esser sempre ed in ogni cosa tal che non discordi da se stesso, ma faccia un corpo solo di tutte queste bone condizioni; di sorte che ogni suo atto risulti e sia composto di tutte le virtù . . . talmente tra sé concatenate, che vanno ad un fine ed ad ogni effetto tutte possono concorrere e servire. Però bisogna che sappia valersene, e per lo paragone e quasi contrarietà dell'una talor far che l'altra sia più chiaramente conosciuta, come i boni pittori, i quali con l'ombra fanno apparere e mostrano i lumi de' rilievi, e così col lume profundano l'ombra dei piani e compagnano i colori diversi insieme di modo, che per la diversità l'uno e l'altro meglio si dimostra, e 'l posar delle figure contrario l'una all'altra le aiuta a far quell'ufficio che è intenzion del pittore".

133 Ibid., 121: "essendo il male contrario al bene e 'l bene al male, è quasi necessario che per la opposizione e per un certo contrapeso l'un sostenga e fortifichi l'altro, e mancando o crescendo l'uno, così manchi o cresca l'altro perché niuno contrario è senza l'altro suo contrario . . . per quella concatenata contrarietà, necessariamente le furono compagni di modo che sempre, crescendo o mancando l'uno, forza è che così l'altro cresca o manchi".

134 Pico, *Comento* 2.8, 495; for the gulf between God and being, see *De ente et uno*. Pico criticises Ficino for suggesting reciprocity between God and humankind in *Comento*, 488. The *Comento* is an incomplete conglomeration of a *Symposium* commentary and a treatise on love and mythology; see *Comento on a Canzone of Benivieni*, ed. and trans. Sears Jayne

concept of beauty; it rather emphasises the proportioning of qualities in composite things.¹³⁵ As we have seen, this patterning of qualities also shapes the temporal unfolding of things, which links the cosmic to human historicity, dominated by the vicissitudes of fortune and change.¹³⁶ Castiglione's nostalgic tone keeps the tension between fragility and universality before the reader. In a discussion of music in the *Courtier*, *concors discordia* as the movement towards resolution is more prized than the stasis of concord; harmony is experienced as the temporal unfolding of contraries in the cosmos, in history and in the artifice of *musica humana*.¹³⁷ The remark concerns the activity of listening and the judgement of the ears; *concors discordia* as manifest through performance.

The dyadic structure of the world also involves examination of the role of women:

Nature, almost turning in a cycle, realises eternity and in this way gives immortality to mortals... Nature knows how to produce the most perfect thing and thus intends to produce man in his species, not masculine and feminine but... from the joining of masculine and feminine

(Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984), 45–6. On Castiglione's use of Pico's *Comento*, see *ibid.* See Roberts, *Jeweled Style*, 144, on the first appearances of *concors discordia* in Horace, *Ep.* 1.12.19, on Empedocles; for other uses, see *inter alia* Manilius, 1.142; Ovid, *Meta.* 1.433; Lucan, 1.98 on the “jarring harmony” of smouldering political strife; Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 11.9.17; Augustine *Epist.*, 16.4.

135 See *Comento* 2.8, 495 for beauty as “proporzionata commistione”.

136 For the decay and change of language in time, see *Cort.* 1.26; cf. McLaughlin, *Literary imitation*, 268, on Bembo's view in the *Prose della volgar lingua* of the vernacular as passing through a cycle of decline and revival in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, in contrast to the Quattrocento view of Tuscan as growing to maturity from the Trecento.

137 At 1.28, in the early discussions of *grazia* and *affettazione*, the Magnifico Giuliano's states that in musical harmony “due consonanzie perfette” result in “sazietà” whereas the resolution of a dissonant second or seventh produces delight, “le orecchie nostre stanno suspese e più avidamente attendono e gustano le perfette, e diletansi talor di quella dissonanzia della seconda o settima”, “our ears listen intently and await and relish the perfects more avidly, delighting in that dissonance of the second or seventh” (*Cortegiano*, 62–3). See James Haar, “The Courtier as Musician: Castiglione's View of the Science and Art of Music” in Robert W. Hanning and David Rosand eds., *Castiglione: the ideal and the real in Renaissance culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 165–89, esp. 168–69 on the comment as a garbled version of the rules for counterpoint in Gafurius' *Practica musice* (1496). Haar suggests that the comment makes sense only if it refers to a manner of performance where dissonance is freely introduced; he notes Giulio Caccini's preface to *Euridice* (1600) who speaks of *sprezzatura* as the charm lent by dissonant short notes over bass notes and aimed for total grace (“intera grazia”) in music.

arises a composite which conserves the human species . . . and thus masculine and feminine are always together, nor can one be without the other . . . because one sex by itself is imperfect, the ancient theologians attributed both sexes to God; thus Orpheus said that in Jupiter was masculine and feminine. (III.14)¹³⁸

The complementarity of male and female that perpetuates species over time corresponds to the concord or *philia* of the elements which holds all things in the tempered proportion of *musica mundana* (III.18).¹³⁹ The union between man and woman is achieved through love, which is both an element of *concors discordia* and transcends it. Love is the will which transcends order, as *grazia* arises from the tempered concord of measure and moves beyond it. We move from pattern as the proportion of contraries to something further, which enhances and illuminates a larger order.

Women, described as embodiments of the ideal in which outer gracefulness “reveals” inner virtue, thus hold a privileged role in the work. Castiglione’s praise of the Duchess of Urbino, Elisabetta Gonzaga, who presides over the *ragionamenti*, and of her successor, Eleonora Gonzaga, lauded at IV.2, gives a striking illustration of *grazia* arising from *concatenata contrarietà*. At I.4 Elisabetta is described as “una catena che tutti in amor tenesse uniti”, creating concord amongst her courtiers. The same image is used of her “heaven sent” successor, with her virtues “like a chain that composes and adorns her every movement” (IV.2).¹⁴⁰

The “concatenata contrarietà” of the world is translated to the virtue of these women, who illustrate Bembo’s claim that beauty is the ornament of the soul, “vero trofeo della vittoria dell’anima” (IV.59). This *catena*, like its mythic prototype, the golden chain of being in the *Iliad*, reaches from the highest virtues to the smallest particulars, the same range that Castiglione claims for

138 Cortegiano, 277: “la natura, quasi tornando in circolo, adempie la eternità ed in tal modo dona la immortalità ai mortali . . . la natura intende sempre produr la cosa più perfetta . . . così della compagnia di maschio e di femina risulta un composito conservativo della specie umana . . . E però maschio e femina da natura son sempre insieme, né po esser l’un star senza l’altro . . . E perché un sesso solo dimostra imperfezione, attribuiscono gli antichi teologi l’uno e l’altro a Dio: onde Orfeo disse che love era maschio e femina”.

139 See Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d’amore* (publ. 1535, composed c. 1495–1501) for extensive discussion of the universal love—and copulation—which sustains and replenishes the cosmic order.

140 Cortegiano, 365: “ne risulta una catena, che ogni suo movimento di tutte queste condizioni insieme compone e adorna”. Eleonora Gonzaga was the builder of the sixteenth century extension to Villa Imperiale at Pesaro, discussed below.

grazia. Castiglione's description of the Duchesses shows the passage from the *constantia* and decorum of *De officiis* to the vertical order, the golden chain of being. This vertical ascent is initiated by love, inspired by beauty.

Women are the ornaments of court life, subordinate to men, yet leading them to higher perfection.¹⁴¹ The association of female virtue with temperance makes them exemplars of decorum, while beauty, as inspiration of chivalry, is the 'light' or 'splendour' adorning praiseworthy action:

no court can have ornament or splendour or liveliness without women, and no courtier can be gracious, pleasing or daring . . . thus discussion of the courtier is always left utterly imperfect if women do not give their part to that grace with which they make courtiership perfect and adorned (III.3)¹⁴²

The court ladies preside over the *ragionamenti*, but do not enter them—their role is to frame and adorn the discussions, by grace of word or gesture, as at the end of Book I they perform a dance “con estrema grazia e singular piacer di chi le vide”, which translates the lengthy arguments on *grazia* and *sprezzatura* into physical enactment (I.56). More moving is the final framing gesture of Emilia Pia at the ecstatic culmination of Bembo's oration, as she brings him back to the body and context with consummate urbanity (IV.71).

Commentators on the *Courtier* have noted that *grazia* implies a relation between two people or things; it is an inclination, a mode and something sought from another—the courtier shows grace in order to win the grace (i.e. favour) of his lord.¹⁴³ This relational character is noted by Firenzuola, who refers to the Senecan notion of grace as reward returned and the graceful

¹⁴¹ The other side of this is their limitation to a decorative role, as described by Pugliese (*Castiglione*, 276): “merely ornamental in the court environment, [the court lady] performs and adorns the art of courtiership and is instrumental with respect to the courtier, who is motivated by her to carry out worthy deeds and to seek his own self-improvement”.

¹⁴² “corte alcuna . . . non può aver ornamento o splendore in sé né allegria senza donne, né cortegiano alcun essere aggraziato, piacevole o ardito . . . così ancor il ragionar del cortegiano è sempre imperfettissimo, se le donne . . . non danno lor parte di quella grazia, con quale fanno perfetta ed adornano la cortegiania”.

¹⁴³ See Eduardo Saccone, “*Grazia, sprezzatura, affettazione in the Courtier*”, in Hanning and Rosand eds., *Castiglione: the ideal and the real*, 45–67; Rebhorn, *Courtly Performances*, 46; Gagliardi, *Misura*, 83, on *grazia* as an absolute value which can be realised only relatively—in relation to the measure or recognition of others. Saccone notes that the presence of two parties in grace appears both in secular and theological usages.

woman as dear to those who see her.¹⁴⁴ *Grazia* is close to the way that praise was used, to signal a quality ‘in’ things and the kind of response they elicit.¹⁴⁵ Where praise concerns actions done or state, *grazia* however suggests predisposition or inclination—it appears at first sight, and “promises” the worthiness of the courtier (1.14).¹⁴⁶ If grace implies relation, it accompanies and composes actions: the first description of *grazia* calls it “un ornamento che componga e compagni tutte le operazioni”.¹⁴⁷ The “chain of the virtues” of the second Duchess, a composite whole which accommodates itself to each adjustment of its parts, is described by the same verbs, *comporre* and *adornare*. If grace was linked by Quintilian to rhetorical performance (“*gratia actionis*”), Castiglione gives it wider range, which assists in modifying the conception of ornament; Saccone notes it is a modality or process, despite its apparent reification into a fixed substance.¹⁴⁸

Grazia is associated with emanation and expression. Pico in his Benivieni commentary calls *grazia* “una certa qualità . . . la quale appare e risplende nelle cose belle”.¹⁴⁹ Castiglione similarly says “ad ogni cosa dà supremo ornamento questa grazia e sacra bellezza”. Castiglione also echoes Ficino in his *Symposium* commentary, *El libro dell'amore* 1.3, who states “el mondo significa ornamento di molte cose composte . . . La gratia di questo Mondo e di questo ornamento, è la bellezza”.¹⁵⁰ *Grazia* illuminates the transcendent origin of beauty while ornament reveals the beauty which arises from perfect, ordered wholeness. Varchi’s description of grace as the “ray and splendour of the first and supreme good which spreads through and penetrates the whole world in all its parts” insists on this emanative character.¹⁵¹ Firenzuola renders Ficino’s definition with allusion to *concininitas*: “la bellezza è una certa grazia, la quale nasce dalla

144 Firenzuola, *Dialogo*, 218–19: “E chiamasi grazia, perciocché la fa gratia, cioè cara, colei in cui si risplende questo raggio”.

145 See Saccone, “*Grazia*”, 48, 65, n. 5.

146 *Cortegiano*, 41.

147 Ibid. Cf. *ibid.*, 56: “il cortegiano ha da compagnare l’operazion sue, i gesti, gli abiti, in somma ogni movimento co la grazia”, “the courtier must accompany all his actions, gestures, dress, in short every movement with grace” (1.24).

148 Saccone, “*Grazia*”, 48, 51.

149 Pico *Comento*, 565. Pico identifies grace with Venus, describing it as a ray of splendour infused in the earthly body; he associates it with the shining faces of Moses (Exodus 34:35) and of Plotinus in ecstasy.

150 *Dell'amore*, 11–12. At 5.5, Ficino refers to humankind as “scintilla dell’ornamento divino” (*ibid.*, 88).

151 Varchi, *Libro della beltà e grazia*, TA I, 88. Varchi refers to Pico; unlike Castiglione he contrasts beauty based in proportion and *grazia* as material versus spiritual beauty.

concinnità di piu membri", calling *concinnità* a "certain order, sweet and full of charm".¹⁵²

In Ficino we see the pseudo Dionysian theme of light which creates universal order and illuminates it; he repeats the terms *bellezza*, *grazia*, *ornamento* and *splendore* to describe the radiance of the beautiful which enraptures the lover.¹⁵³ Ficino's commentary also shows a situation where the distinction between beauty and ornament dwindles, as the revelation of the beautiful at each level of being illuminates something beyond itself, drawing the lover to further disclosures and contemplation. Ficino uses ornament to signify the emanative qualities of a beautiful thing, its excellence, its plenitude and order.¹⁵⁴ Light is not merely a privileged metaphor for the emanative character of beauty as the procession of the divine; it is the condition of our participation in this process:

the whole world order that we see is received by the eyes . . . in this way it is in the light which is infused in our eyes . . . thus it comes that the whole ornament of this world, the third face of God, offers itself as incorporeal to our eyes by the light of the incorporeal sun. (5.4)¹⁵⁵

152 "un certo ordine, dolce, e pieno di garbo", Firenzuola, *Dialogo*, 198. He emphasises harmony of qualities when he calls beauty "grata unione, quel decoro, quella temperanza", *ibid.*, 199.

153 See *Libro* 2.7, 6.7, on the two Venuses, contemplative and generative, following Plotinus, *Enneads* 111.5.2–3 who gives the two Aphrodites as Soul and secondary soul which generates the love presiding over marriages. The "sparks of splendour" which the lower Venus receives from the higher goddess and transfuses demiurgically into the "matter of the world" are described in the pseudo-Dionysian language of light. For the association of grace and ornament, see 5.1 and 5.2, where they are both called "virtù dell'animo" manifest through words, shape and acts. At 2.8 and 5.2 splendour and grace ravish the mind and turn it to the contemplation of the beautiful; at 6.2 the mind is drawn by the spark or the ray of the splendour of a beautiful person. Ficino follows a 'positive' or kataphatic way, proceeding by way of similarity and predication of qualities to the divine; Pico's *Comento* offered a corresponding apophatic account of beauty which emphasised the gulf between creation and God.

154 See *ibid.*, 2.5 on the "act" or "ray" of beauty that penetrates the angelic mind, which it adorns with forms; it fills the world soul with the "order of reasons", fortifies nature with seeds and clothes matter with forms. The four are said to be "illuminated" by this ray and their illuminated state is described as an ornament. See 6.3 on the spheres of the higher elements and the planets as adorned with rational animals (i.e. daimons); 6.7 on the world soul adorned with forms; 5.4 on the "ornament" of the world which we apprehend through vision.

155 *Ibid.*, 87: "questo ordine del mondo che si vede, si piglia dagli occhi . . . in quel modo che gli è nella luce la quale è negli occhi infusa . . . onde nasce che tutto l'ornamento di questo

In Ficino's celebrated description of beauty as a "certain act or ray" (2.5), the energetic force of this emanative concept is clear. Ficino's description echoes through Cinquecento art treatises where beauty is regarded as light and movement.¹⁵⁶

Castiglione also associates grace with the notion of virtue as the ornament of the soul, rehearsed in Ficino. In terms that recall *De officiis*, Ficino says that "the virtue of the mind shows itself in a certain ornament in words, in gestures and most honourable acts" (5.1).¹⁵⁷ Still closer to Castiglione, he says "this grace of virtue, form or voice, which calls the mind to it and ravishes by means of reason, sight and hearing, is rightly called Beauty" (5.2).¹⁵⁸ In Castiglione's formulation we however see the move towards artifice; grace is a quality in the courtier's appearance that *suggests* his virtues, not a sign of their existence.¹⁵⁹ Both Castiglione and Ficino base their arguments on the beautiful as the 'flower' or extrinsic sign of intrinsic good, involving a rehearsal of *ornatus mundi* (precious stones, flowers, animals, stars).¹⁶⁰

Grace as the movement of the proportionate or the measured is considered superior to them because it actualises them and makes them relations. Thus Castiglione describes it as something more than the proportion or tempered measure (*mediocrità*) from which it cannot be separated.¹⁶¹ The significance of grace in discussion of ornament lies in the notion of movement or mode which relates the beautiful to something—hence its association with artistic

mondo, che è el terzo volto di Dio, per la luce del sole incorporale offerisce sé incorporale agli occhi".

156 Lomazzo repeats Ficino's definition in *Idea* 26; see *Idea*, ed. Klein, I, 215; *Scritti*, I, 311.

157 *Libro*, 76: "la virtù dello animo mostra di fuori un certo ornamento nelle parole, ne' gesti, e nelle opere onestissime".

158 Ibid "questa grazia di virtù, figura o voce, che chiama lo animo a sé e rapisce per il mezzo della ragione, viso e audito, rettamente si chiama Bellezza". The privileging of reason, sight and hearing as the faculties which perceive beauty echoes Augustine.

159 Quintilian XI.3.144 illustrates the level of artifice involved in *actio* when he specifies how the folds of the toga should become disordered in the performance of certain emotional states.

160 Ficino, *Libro*, 5.1, 76, on goodness as interior, beauty as exterior perfection, seed to flower. Cf. Castiglione IV.57: "la bellezza estrinseca è vero segno della bontà intrinseca e nei corpi è impressa quella grazia più e meno quasi un carattere dell'anima, per lo quale essa estrinsecamente è conosciuta". Castiglione follows Ficino as against Pico's remark that the beautiful is a species of the good, and thus distinct from it (*Commento*, 489).

161 Cf. Firenzuola, *Dialogo*, 219 on *grazia* as a "splendour" aroused in a hidden way by a "certain union of members which we cannot explain", "la grazia non sia altro che uno splendore, il quale si ecciti per occulta via da una certa unione di alcuni membri che noi non sappiamo dire".

maniera. This becomes apparent in later art treatises, exemplified in Lomazzo's discussion of the *linea serpentinata* with its spiralling upwards movement as the "line of grace".¹⁶² Firenzuola distinguishes *leggiadria*, which involves the whole movement of the person from *vaghezza*, where motion is the movement of desire.¹⁶³

So, if ornament shows things illuminated in the light of their perfection, grace concerns the mode of illumination, or illumination as movement. Castiglione's discussion of beauty opens with beauty as divine emanation ("influsso delle bontà divina") shining on a thing which fulfils the Thomist criteria of *proportio*, *integritas* and *claritas*.¹⁶⁴ Castiglione illustrates this with the image of a jewelled, golden vase struck by light ("a guisa a raggio di sole che percuota in un bel vaso d'oro terso e variato di preziose gemme").¹⁶⁵ The passage echoes Ficino on the fantasy struck by beauty as a mirror struck by sunlight; it also suggests the kind of image used in the rhetorical tradition to describe ornate speech as artefact.¹⁶⁶

162 *Trattato*, I.1, in *Scritti* 11, 29.

163 Firenzuola, *Dialogo*, 220.

164 "Ma parlando di questa bellezza che noi intendemo, che è quella che solamente appar nei corpi e massimamente nei volti umani e move questo ardente desiderio che noi chiamiamo amore, diremo che è un influsso della bontà divina, il quale, benché si spanda sopra tutte le cose create come il lume del sole, pur quando trova una volta ben misurata e composta con una certa gioconda concordia di colori distinti ed autati dai lumi e dall'ombre e da una ordinata distanza e termini di linee, vi s'infonde e si dimostra bellissimo, e quel suietto ove riluce adorna e illumina d'una grazia e splendor mirabile", "Speaking of this beauty that we know, which is only that which appears in bodies and above all in human faces, and moves that ardent desire called love, let us say that it is an influx of divine good. Although it spreads over all created things like the light of the sun, yet when it finds a measured face, composed with a certain pleasant concord of distinct colours enhanced by light and shade and by an ordered structure of lines, it flows into it and shows itself most lovely, adorning and illuminating that in which it shines with wonderful grace and splendour", IV.53, 428. Firenzuola, *Dialogo*, 195, discussing beauty as elevating the mind to contemplation and desire for heavenly things, speaks of "un volto decorato di questa divina grazia".

165 Castiglione, IV.53, 428.

166 Ficino, *Libro*, 7.1. Cf. *ibid.*, 6.17 which compares beauty in bodies, soul, angel and God to light in water, air, fire and the sun; embodied beauty as an image in a reflective surface goes back to the Plotinian theme of matter as a mirror and Plato's comments in *Sophist* on phantasms created by nature and art. Leone Ebreo compares the sun reflected in diaphanous things to the representation of a concept in our *fantasia* and memory, where it appears "non in quella unica semplicità, ma in una multifaria e unita immaginazione", *Dialoghi d'amore* (Bari: Laterza, 2008), 322–23.

The splendid, glittering vase exhibits the importance of surface appearance in Castiglione, while the grace with which artistry is performed emphasises the performer rather than the virtue displayed. Castiglione illustrates the virtues of the Urbino court through its recreations, by analogy with Pythagoras who worked out the size of Hercules' body from his foot, which measured out the Olympic stadium (III.1).¹⁶⁷ The aspects of life that might be considered most ephemeral or decorative become a source of measure which allows us to deduce the proportion of a thing in its totality. Here we see one effect of the spread of artifice through the whole continuum of representation. Another effect is the prominence of exteriority, as Gagliardi notes exteriority and recognition by others as the means by which the courtier achieves a unified image of himself.¹⁶⁸

Castiglione works hard to balance artistry with its paradigm in universal harmony and its source in the light of the *influsso divino*. It is not enough to assert the continuity between the order of the whole and the responding structure of wholeness in each thing, but to show its perfection revealed in the ornament of *grazia*: "ad ogni cosa dà supremo ornamento questa grazia e sacra bellezza". However, the emphasis on grace as perceived in outer form and the attention given to appearances which 'suggest' or 'promise' virtue contribute to the preoccupation with superficial artifice which even the culmination of the work cannot entirely dispel. The celebrated final pages, at the conclusion of Bembo's oration, show the courtiers gazing from the palace at daybreak to see the landscape which has lost its harshness in the dawn light—and in the light of the speech on love.¹⁶⁹ The setting is revealed as a *locus amoenus*, a place of poetic artifice but also as a perspective which stretches from the Duchess's apartment, a place of measure, temperance and concord, into the natural setting.

Castiglione's idealisation of the court of Urbino depicts it as historically unique and as a model for imitation. It develops Alberti's analogy of house and city into a palace-city which forms a harmonious totality. Castiglione's concern to work out the structure of artifice means that the object represented can be at any point along the continuum of representation. This continuum is emphasised over the specific nature and claims of occasion and setting. Thus in the *Cortegiano* the description of the continuity of *sprezzatura* and *grazia* takes

167 *Cortegiano*, 259–260. See Motta, *Castiglione*, 227–29, for the adaptation of this passage from Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, I.1.1–3.

168 Gagliardi, *Misura*, 87–88.

169 *Cortegiano*, IV.73. Urbino's landscape is introduced at I.2 as "lacking in delight" ("non ameno") and "harsh" ("aspero").

precedence over an account of how the various areas of activity fit together. Not only do outer things express inner things but frivolous things express profound matters, as in the game to define *cortegiania*, called by Castiglione an *impresa*.¹⁷⁰ Later treatises on the *impresa* expounded their structure of representation through analogies of “body” and “soul”; as concern with the structure of artifice grows, focus falls on the relations between the embodying and conceptual elements within a continuum of artifice which presents itself as naturalness.¹⁷¹

We argued that with Castiglione ornament is treated not as an object, in the way that antiquarianism encouraged, but as manifestation and mode, depicted in the sustained artifice required by the continuous staging of court life. The other point about Castiglione’s *sprezzatura* is that it brings an equally adorned (apparently ‘artless’) manner to all activities, irrespective of their seriousness. This continuum of artificiality calibrates the performance of *sprezzatura* to the given uniqueness of situations, rendering them occasions for artifice. Under such conditions, the search for meaning becomes subordinated to the sustained elegance of form.

Fabula de homine

Castiglione’s combination of pervasive artifice and contemplation is shared by Juan Luis Vives’ Humanist parable, *Fabula de homine* (1518), which explores the two themes of the *theatrum mundi* topos: the world as spectacle and the artificiality inherent in the topos of life as a play.¹⁷² Vives’s fable takes place

170 The *impresa* to define *cortegiania* is an after-dinner entertainment; see Thomas Greene, “Il Cortegiano and the Choice of a Game”, in Hanning and Rosand eds., *Castiglione: the ideal and the real*, 1–15. Similar entertainments include a game guessing the meaning of the jewel worn by the Duchess (depicted in Raphael’s portrait) structured like an emblem, with *quaestio, figura* and explanatory sonnet. The game is proposed by L’Unico Aretino at 1.9, 30–31, whose ‘extemporaneous’ sonnet on the jewel is so “ingenioso e culto” that it is obviously the product of careful labour. This performance of *sprezzatura* betrays its *studio e fatica*, and the *impresa* is duly abandoned.

171 On the *impresa*, see Chapter 9. The *Cortegiano* was a topic for academic discourses at the Accademia degli Affidati, founded 1562, whose members included theorists of *impresa* such as Luca Contile and Alessandro Farra; see Dorigen Caldwell, *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Impresa, in Theory and Practice* (New York: AMS Press, 2004), 98–101.

172 The second theme has celebrated developments at the hands of Shakespeare, Calderón and Quevedo in *Sueños y discursos* (1627). The related “Characters” tradition of Theophrastus, with its compendium of moral types, is reinvigorated by La Bruyère.

in an amphitheatre created by the gods for the birthday of Juno, which is the whole world “so large, so elaborate [*ornatus*], so diversified and beautiful in places, just as you see it”.¹⁷³ The gods in their theatre also recalls Augustine’s identification of the ancient gods with poetry, particularly theatre, made to refute Varro’s distinction between mythical or poetic, natural or philosophic and civil understandings of the gods.¹⁷⁴

Amongst the actors on the earth, the stage of this world-theatre, none is more praiseworthy than man, who imitates all things in the world, and reveals his resemblance to Jupiter: “as he of gods the greatest, embracing all things, is all things, they saw man, Jupiter’s mime, be all things also”.¹⁷⁵ Where Jove’s universality is a participation in all things, man’s universality is mimetic, as he impersonates all things, from vegetal to divine.¹⁷⁶ When man imitates perfectly the gods, they beg him to be unmasked and join them as spectator—to rise from active to contemplative life. At this point man astonishes them by his perfect imitation of Jove, “penetrating the inaccessible light surrounded by darkness”, so that they recognise him as Jove himself.¹⁷⁷ As he puts off his mask and body, which “had made of him an animal so diverse, so desultory, so

Curtius, *European Literature*, 138–44, traces the topos in Plato, *Laws* 1, 644d–e; *Philebus* 50b; Horace, *Sat.* 11.7.82; Clement, *Cohortatio ad gentes* 1.1.3; Augustine, *Enarratio ad Psalmes* 127; John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 1, 190; Pallades, *Greek Anthology* x.72, Apuleius *De mundo* 27; pseudo-Aristotle, *De cosmo*; Tertullian *De spectaculis* 30; Augustine, *Epist.* 73; Lambert of Hersfeld; John of Salisbury, *Entheticus*; Campanella, *Sonnets* 14, 15; Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* 1.41.

173 “extitit mundus hic universus, tam magnus, tam ornatus, tam varius, ac subinde pulcher, uti cernitis”, *Fabula in Opera Omnia*, IV (Valencia: Montfort, 1783), 3; translation of Nancy Lenkeith in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Cassirer, Kristeller and Randall, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, repr. 1980), 387.

174 *City of God* VI.6–7, citing Varro, *Antiquitatum libri*. Augustine is the source for Varro. Cf. Lactantius, *Div. inst.* VI.20; Salvianus, *De gubernat. Dei* VI, for dedication of various types of spectacle to the gods; Salvianus includes gymnasium and palestra as quasi-spectacle settings. For Patristic writings on theatre, see Douhet, *Dictionnaire des mystères* (Paris: Migne, 1854), 15ff., 31ff.; Alessandro D’Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano* (1891, repr. Rome: Bardi, 1966), I, 8–18. On the influence of Augustine’s comments for Humanists, see Fabrizio Cruciani and Ferdinando Taviani, “Discorso preliminare per una ricerca in collaborazione”, *Quaderni di teatro* 2, 7 (1980), 46–47. Petrarch speaks of the gods taken captive by Cupid as “gli dei di Varro”, *Triumphus Cupidinis* 1.158.

175 “ut ipse deorum maximus, virtute sua omnia complectitur, omnia est, sic et hunc ipsius Pantominum esse videbant”, *Fabula*, 4; Lenkeith translation, 389.

176 The animals mimicked by man are described according to emotional dispositions: angry, rapacious, fearful etc.

177 “ad inaccessibilem illam penetrans lucem caligine vallatam”, *Fabula*, 5.

changing [*versipellem*] like a polypus and a chameleon”, man is disclosed to be like the gods, son of Jupiter as they are.¹⁷⁸ When he banquets with the gods at the end of the fable (i.e. when he joins the ranks of the immortals), he resumes his mask.¹⁷⁹ Likeness to the gods reveals human nature to be in its essence imitative, man’s *persona* is his true ornament—both ‘praise’ and ‘instrument’ for his proper work of mimesis.¹⁸⁰ Vives’s *Fabula* takes the Hermetic notion of man as god of the world or as protean magus in Pico’s *Oratio*, and presents it as the basis of the creativity founded in imitation.¹⁸¹ Vives opens the *Fabula* with the claim that “homo ipse ludus et fabula est”; man’s world of creation is therefore a theatre.¹⁸²

The *Fabula* conflates theatre as an image for the festive contemplation (*theōria*) discussed in Philo, *On the creation* 78, with theatre as a topos for human activity and situation in the world.¹⁸³ Unlike the denizens of the “stage-play world”, Vives refuses notions of mimetic distance by asserting that human being *is* imitation, whether this reveals likeness to the divine or the protean mimesis of all things in the world. He makes no distinction between man’s body and his actor’s costume; when man’s body is admired by the gods for its decorum and usefulness, Vives terms it *exuviae*, meaning something stripped off, like a skin, but primarily signifying spoils.¹⁸⁴ Man’s seat amongst the gods is not an apotheosis which translates him into divine *quies*; Vives’ actor progresses within a theatrical continuum from mimicry to revealed likeness. This continuity is achieved at the cost of conflating the world and the theatre, the body through which we live in the world and the *ornatus*—the accoutrements through which we imitate it in its variety and completion.

The *Fabula* also rehearses the old argument that art can complete and perfect nature, developed emphatically by Gianozzo Manetti in *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* (c. 1452–53), who argued that the “marvellous spectacle” of the “most beautiful and ornate world” is made “much more beautiful, much

178 Lenkeith trans., 390.

179 “recepta, quam tantisper posuerat, persona, namque is ipsi personae habitus est honos”, *Fabula*, 8.

180 Ibid., 7.

181 See Charles Fantazzi, “Vives’ *Fabula de homine* as a dramatic representation of Pico’s *Oratio*”, *Neolatinisten Nieuwsbrief* 15 (2003), 10–19.

182 Vives, *Fabula*, 3.

183 Vives does not invoke the other aspect of the theatre topos—that we are actors or puppets controlled by the gods or performing the roles that inscrutable fate casts for us in life.

184 *Fabula*, 6, “Brachiis personales gestans exuvias”.

more ornate and far more refined” through human artifice.¹⁸⁵ Manetti indeed refers to creation as “rude”, while the discovery, construction and perfection of things is the result of human creation, founded on human acuity.¹⁸⁶ In Vives, Jove’s creation is specifically described as a theatre and its second, human recreation, is a mime.

Ernesto Grassi discusses the *Fabula* as a fable for the Humanist transformation of *theōria*, whereby the divine is contemplated through human variety and mutability.¹⁸⁷ As it undermines distinctions between the object and mode of representation, the *Fabula* intimates that the ultimate cost of representing the world as theatre is that we perceive the theatre as the world, like Jupiter’s cosmic amphitheatre.

Theatre is a constant presence in the coming chapters as they treat of spectacle, scenography, expressivity and the integration of fragments into efficacious and coherent scenes. The polyvalent character of theatre is important to stress; it can be symbolic or instrumental, playful or controlling. It presents a model of artifice which may be self-enclosed yet exists in relation to what is beyond itself; its capacity for replication creates a continuum between each instance or form of theatre. By the late Cinquecento, theatre becomes a privileged mode of designing co-ordination of representational means—music, dance, gesture, song, scene, costume, as at the Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza in the 1580s.¹⁸⁸ The continuity between theatre and other spaces or situations thus has positive and problematic sides. The attractive aspect lies in the possibility for idealisation and playfulness to enter from theatre into non-theatre, with the richness and creativity of experimentation which this allows. The problematic element concerns the confusion of theatre and non-theatre.

The prominence of theatricality in the visual arts in the Renaissance was not just a product of perspective although scenographic representation

185 “multo pulchiora multoque ornata ac longe politiora”, in Trinkaus, *In our Image and Likeness*, I, 246–7.

186 “post primam illam novam ac rudem creationem ex singulari quodam et precipuo humano mentis acumine a nobis adinventata ac confecta et absoluta fuisse videantur”, *ibid.*

187 Ernesto Grassi, *Potenza della fantasia* (Naples: Guida, 1990), 152–54, 234–37, drawing on the association of *theōria* with festivity (see Plato, *Laws* 653d; pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 376a; Philo, *On the creation*, 78) and the vision of the unexpected or unknown. Grassi notes that in the *Fabula* the gods change from spectators to protagonists as they are impersonated onstage by man.

188 The first part of Francesco Patrizi’s *Della poetica*, *La Deca Istoriale* discusses Greek theatre in these terms.

provided an appropriate vehicle for conceptual and ceremonial reliance on theatre. Theatre typifies settings, as rhetoric does, and these settings 'contain' arguments. The typification of settings in the theatre accompanies or attends the typification of characters, who are found in certain places, produce certain arguments and perform certain actions.¹⁸⁹ Certain images, as much as certain themes or words, may 'contain' arguments, hence the link between theatre and the *ars memoriae*. This typical or topical character highlights the continuities between various settings, while each context has its own unique features. It is the structure of continuity which is of interest here, rather than dramatic literature.

Theatre works in two ways with ornament, corresponding to its claim to communicate universals and communicate *universally*, so that content and mode are related.¹⁹⁰ The Roman etymologies of *ornamentum* and *ornatus* in Varro and Pompeius Festus link ornament with theatre.¹⁹¹ At one level, it requires framing whose lavishness is appropriate to the universality of its representations, as Aristotle spoke of dramatic spectacle as creating a *kosmos* for the eyes and Vitruvius derived the theatre plan from an astrological chart (*De arch.* v.6.1).¹⁹² The framework of decoration that encloses painted histories or the sumptuous ornament of traditional theatre interiors reflect this requirement, as do the use of costumes, regalia and the presence of music, with its 'cosmic' origins.¹⁹³ Second, ornament appears within theatre at the level of affect, where it is absorbed into style as the performance of character. The liveliness, colour and movement which signal the absorption of ornament into

189 See Vasaly, *Representations*, 161–72, for rhetorical uses of such types like the *bonus rusticus*.

190 On poetic universality, see Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451b, further discussed at Chapter 7.

191 Varro, *De lingua latina* vi.76, traces *ornamentum* from *os*, and associates it with actors. He glosses *ornatus* "quasi ab ore natus", with reference to cosmetics. Festus, *De verborum significatu quae supersunt* 185, similarly illustrates *ornatus* as "cultus ipse, quo quis ornatur" with allusion to theatre, "ut cum dicimus aliquem tragico vel comico ornatu prodire". Cf. Bonaventure, *De reductione artium ad theologiam* 1, who groups theatre (*theatrica, ars ludorum*) with the mechanical arts which provide delight as opposed to those which serve use; see *Opera Omnia* v (Florence: Quaracchi, 1891), 319.

192 Aristotle *Poetics* 1449b. Aristotle insists that such spectacular elements should be subservient to the *mythos*. In interpretations of Vitruvius, the chart could be inserted within the orchestra, or within the cavea; Palladio gives both solutions in his illustrations to Barbaro's Vitruvius commentary, 249, 258. See Giangiorgio Zorzi, *Le Ville e Teatri di Andrea Palladio* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1969), 235–282.

193 The stripped modern stage with its minimal furnishings works conversely by signalling estrangement from normal appearances as a condition for aesthetic reflection.

style in the rhetorical tradition pass into scenic depictions, where they make the “mute poetry” of images eloquent and affecting. If rhetoric or poetic illusion provides the criteria for lively figuration, scenic representation provides a mode of insertion, cohesion and organisation even before we approach the question of perspective and theatre.

Ornament and *Disegno*, Colour and Perspective

Ornament Internalised: Grace and Design

Castiglione's account of *grazia* and discussion of universal judgement reappear in the treatises on art, whose conceptual character shows the confluence of an Aristotelian basis to *disegno* and rhetorical conceptions of invention and style. The rhetorical criteria do not comprise a complete account of art; they constitute a reflection on representational means and effects within a conception of art founded on metaphysics and faculty psychology.¹ Thus Aristotelian accounts of change as movement between contraries provide the bedrock of thinking on form and quality for rhetorical discussion of affect and dramatic notions of interaction. This Aristotelian basis is strengthened by the growth of critical commentary on the *Poetics* from the 1540s on, and by critics such as Varchi, whose *Lezzione nella quale si disputa della maggioranza delle arti e qual sia più nobile, la scultura o la pittura* rehearses *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.4, and whose *Lezzione sopra un sonetto di Michelangelo* (1547) reiterates doctrines of actualisation, potency and substantial change. The treatise literature is frequently posterior to artistic developments, although it gives us the terms to describe this development.

We consider this literature here, to see how it treats what Wohl terms the second kind of “rhetorical *ornato*”, i.e. ornament conceived as a stylistic quality or as a mode.² We discuss the presence of ornament in the processes of idealisation which invoke the ‘idea’, and associations of ornament with accidental quality, notably colour. This returns us to the link between ornament and light and the transformation of *perspectiva* from light metaphysics to painter’s perspective as a “legitimate construction”, a pre-ordered geometric schema.

Zeuxis’ portrait of Helen of Troy is cited by Pino, Dolce and Zuccari as central to pictorial invention.³ In Dolce’s *Aretino* “una certa imagine della perfettione”

1 On the influence of rhetoric in Renaissance art, see Caroline van Eck, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

2 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 245–47.

3 Paolo Pino, *Dialogo di pittura* (Venice: Pavolo Gherardo, 1548), repr. TA 1, 98–99; Federico Zuccari, *L’Idea de’ pittori, scultori e architetti* (1607) (Rome: Marco Pagliarini, 1768), II.2, 78, treats the myth as the judicial imitation of nature; Mark Roskill, *Dolce’s Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968, repr. 2000), 130,

in the mind supplies a model for critical judgement.⁴ Dolce states that this “image of perfection” is innate in men of intelligence (*ingenioso*), although it is cultivated by study. Zeuxis’ idea thus becomes a normative, critical standard.

Vasari echoes the Zeuxis topos when he calls *disegno* “the imitation of the most beautiful parts of nature in all figures” (“lo imitare il più bello della natura in tutte le figure”).⁵ His famous description of *disegno* follows the formation of the universal concept in Aristotelian thought:

proceeding from the intellect he draws out a universal judgement like a form or idea of all things of nature . . . and from this cognition a certain *concetto* and judgement is born in the mind of the thing which is to be expressed with the hands, which is called *disegno*. Thus one can conclude that *disegno* is nothing other than an apparent expression and declaration of the *concetto* that one has in the soul and likewise imagined in the mind and produced in the idea.⁶

The culmination of this view of *disegno* comes in the writings of academicians of the Accademia di San Luca at the turn of the Seicento, such as Romano Alberti, who calls *disegno* the formal motor of cognition and operations, and Federico Zuccari’s Scholastic *L’Idea de’ pittori, scultori e architetti* (1607), which takes the term to maximum extension.⁷ Already in Pino’s *Dialogo di pittura* painting is called queen of the liberal arts because it gives cognition of all

144–45, where variety should not be “studiosamente ricercata” in excessive juxtaposition of old and young figures, or figures variously posed.

4 Ibid., 104.

5 Vasari, *Vite* IV, 4.

6 Vasari, *Vite* I, 111: “procedendo dall’intelletto cava di molte cose un giudizio universale simile a una forma overo idea di tutte le cose della natura . . . e perché da questa cognizione nasce un certo concetto e giudizio, che si forma nella mente quella tal cosa che poi espressa con le mani si chiama disegno, si può concludere che esso disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell’anima, e di quello che altri si [altresì] è nella mente imaginato e fabricato nell’idea”.

7 Romano Alberti, *Origine et Progresso dell’Accademia del Disegno de’ Pittori, Scultori et Architetti di Roma* (Pavia, 1604), cited in Carlo Ossola, *Autunno del Rinascimento. “Idea del Tempio” dell’arte nell’ultimo Cinquecento* (Florence: Olschki, 1971), 76. On Zuccari’s *Idea*, see Panofsky, *Idea: a Concept in Art Theory* translated by Joseph Peake (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 75–80, 83–95; Summers, *Judgment*, 283–310, on Zuccari’s understanding of Aristotelian traditions in art theory. Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 159, notes that Zuccari’s Aristotelianism, with its reliance on Averroes and medieval commentary, was outdated compared to late Renaissance Aristotelian commentators such as Zabarella.

created things and, as liberal art, gives the liberty to form whatever it likes—the supremacy of art as a form of universal knowledge is mingled with its sophistic capacity to form images at will.⁸ Zuccari divides *disegno* into *disegno esterno* and *disegno interno*, the former being all that we see (creation and artifice) and the latter all our perceptions and mental pictures, of which artistic imaging is a subspecies.⁹ Zuccari declares that he has used the term *disegno* in the sense of *concetto* as he is writing as a painter and for artists, rather than using the philosophical term ‘intention’ or the theological terms ‘exemplar’ or ‘idea’; he subsequently calls *disegno interno* “an idea or form in the intellect representing expressly and distinctly the thing understood by it, which is its term and object”.¹⁰ *Disegno* is the “light of the intellect”, the “spark of divinity”, central to our role as god on earth and our capacity to produce and “see new paradises on earth”, yet he also calls human *disegno*, dependent on sensory apprehension, an accident.¹¹ Zuccari insists repeatedly that *disegno* activates intellect, as the

8 Pino, *Dialogo di pittura*, TA 1, 107: “liberale si può dire la pittura, la qual, come regina dell’arti, largisse e dona buona cognizione de tutte le cose create; liberale anco, come quella a chi è concessa libertà di formar ciò che le piace”.

9 Zuccari, *L’Idea de’ pittori, scultori e architetti* (Rome: Marco Pagliarini, 1768), 6–7. Compare Cellini’s design for the seal of the Florentine Accademia del Disegno, showing Apollo, which discusses *disegno* as “the true Lantern [*Lucerna*] of all the actions that men of all professions undertake”, having two sorts, one in the imaginative faculty (“nell’Immaginativa”) and that resulting from figurative demonstration “quello si dimostra con Linee”. Cellini parallels Apollo, from whom all plants and creatures have their birth “cose maravigliose e ornamento della Terra”, with human artifice in building and adorning cities and buildings, this rehearsing the Stoic analogies of *ornatus mundi* and human artifice. See Michael Cole, *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 94; on Cellini’s other seal design, which showed the *dea natura* as “Iddea” (goddess/idea), see Chapter 12. Zuccari’s personification of Disegno in the Sala del Disegno, Palazzo Zuccari, Rome, celebrated Disegno as *lux intellectus et vita operationum*; see Summers, *Judgment*, 285. Francisco de Holanda also attributes to Michelangelo the notion that all human productive activity is painting or some kind of painting; see *Dialogues on Painting*, trans. Aubrey Bell (Westport, CT: Hyperion, 1979, repr. of 1928 OUP ed.), 37 and 68 on *disegno* as “root of all sciences”.

10 Zuccari, *L’idea*, 7–8: “Il Disegno interno in generale è un’idea, e forma nell’intelletto rappresentante espressamente e distintamente la cosa intesa da quello, che pure è termine, ed oggetto di esso”. Zuccari then distinguishes operations which produce an external material object from the internal activity of the intellect in understanding through the “spiritual forms” it creates of things. At 1.8 Zuccari takes up the Aristotelian distinction between the speculative and practical intellect, the latter subdivided in Aristotelian tradition into moral and productive (“artificiale”).

11 Ibid., 18–19. Zuccari speaks of the three properties of *disegno* as soul, spirit and body; the soul is the “divine spark” and “formative virtue” (ibid., 70).

virtu produttiva; he refers to the passive nature of intellect as *tabula rasa*, or a vase or granary.¹² *Disegno* is conceived by Zuccari as the active intellect, thus he calls it a divine light as through it we resemble god's creativity, or a second sun or generative nature, and finally "segno di Dio in noi".¹³ Without the substantive act of *disegno*, knowledge remains dead and otiose in the intellect, like a tree without fruit.¹⁴ Zuccari thus expands *disegno* to cover a whole range of productive or representational activity, from the intellectual act which actualises the passive intellect to material production. If this renders all arts and disciplines kinds of design, as Zuccari states, it also gives a privileged place to art as a privileged or exemplary form of *disegno*.¹⁵

In art, the productive activity of the practical intellect, *disegno interno* is the formal cause of art and *disegno* in the intellect is the formation of the intelligible species, arising from *disegni* formed in the fantasy and *cogitativa*.¹⁶ *Disegno esterno* is the "example and form of the ideal image" and Zuccari divides *disegno esterno* into nature's creations and the man-made or *artificiale*, subdivided into two kinds—exemplary and fantastic.¹⁷ The first concerns the design of perfect, exemplary forms, based on imitation of nature; the second exhibits all the bizarre, capricious, fantastic inventions which the human mind can invent: decorative arts, theatres, ephemera but also with engineering, mathematical forms, and perspective.¹⁸

Zuccari's discussion of *disegno* is the most ambitious extension of the term, and an elaboration of earlier writers—Armenini, Vasari—castigated for their identification of art with *disegno*; Vasari is criticised for failure to distinguish between *disegno interno* and *disegno esterno*, confusion over the relation between *concetto* and *disegno interno* and his misuse of the term *idea*, discussed below.¹⁹

In Vasari *disegno* manifests itself in the continuity between conceptual activity and performative artifice which produces sustained beauty and grace. From this results the "beauty carried continuously into every detail, which can

12 Ibid., 123, 125–27, 130–31.

13 Ibid., 132, 153–58, 164. Zuccari sees the intellect as acting when the senses are in activity; see *ibid.*, 131.

14 Ibid., 129.

15 Ibid., 145–46.

16 Ibid., 26, 40.

17 Ibid., 69, "esempio e forma dell'immagine ideale"; see *ibid.*, 72, 82–83, 86–91, on the two kinds of *disegno esterno artificiale*.

18 Ibid., 87–89.

19 Ibid., 64.

show all order with more ornament" which he extols.²⁰ The sustained beauty with its new liveliness ("più viva"), its "grace that exceeds measure", and its adaptability to all contexts that is described by Castiglione and Vasari presupposes a notion of continuous enactment.²¹

We saw that Quintilian XII.5 distinguishes *gratia* as the quality proper to *actio*—"gratia actionis".²² *Grazia* may be seen as appearing first in certain figures or motifs, like the *ninfa* or the waving hair and billowing drapery admired by Leonardo and Alberti. In Alberti's *De Pictura* II.45 and Verrocchio's or Botticelli's drawings the inclined head, *contrapposto*, wavy hair and flowing drapery displays the artist's manner and exemplifies the beauty of antique art.²³ Unlike the demigoddesses of late antique and Medieval fables of exornation, the nymph's virtue lies in her grace and movement—her *energeia*. She thus acts as a kind of personification of the artist's grace as her flowing movement figures the expression of the artist's hand and design. Once this grace is grasped, it can be developed into compositional drama, as in Raphael's *Entombment*, or into a mode of figural invention, as in Parmigianino or the prescriptions for *linea serpentinata* Lomazzo attributed to Michelangelo. The metaphoric character of *energeia*, noted by Aristotle, imparted an ornamental and potentially symbolic character to lively form, explicated in Lomazzo's account of the *linea serpentinata*.

The *ninfa*, like her ancestor, the maenad of Hellenistic relief, might also be described as a meta-figure: an ornamental figure which displays or almost personifies praiseworthy qualities of style. Barkan remarks on the *Nebenfigur* in Cinquecento art—the figure without iconographic or narrative relevance that shows artistic beauty, technical skill, artistic liberty or classical erudition.²⁴ The cultivation of *grazia* is also evident in the role of drawing as expression of the artist's individual style; Zuccari calls *grazia* and facility in design (or drawing) the "soul" of *disegno esterno artificiale*, while its "spirit" appears in its liveliness and proud movement.²⁵ *Grazia* as a mode which conveys a content and

20 "una bellezza continuata in ogni minima cosa, che mostrasse tutto quell'ordine con più ornamento", Vasari, *Vite* IV, 5.

21 Ibid., 5, 8. Vasari speaks also of "a rule in license" ("una regola nella licenza") and figures made with a "facilità graziosa e dolce", ibid., 5.

22 On *grazia* as quality, see Varchi, *Libro della beltà e grazia*, repr. TA I, 85.

23 See for example Botticelli's *Allegory of Abundance* or *Autumn* (c. 1480–85, British Museum). See Hugo Chapman and Marzia Faietti, *From Fra Angelico to Michelangelo*, exhibition catalogue (London: British Museum, 2010), 174–75.

24 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 153.

25 Zuccari, *L'idea* II.3, 82. The "body" of *disegno esterno artificiale* is the proportioned and measured outer form.



FIGURE 7.1 Botticelli, *Allegory of Abundance or Autumn*, c. 1475–82.

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exhibits the artist's hand, formed from his powers of judgement and synthesis, is close to *maniera*, as the individual expression of the idealising character of *disegno*.²⁶ This modal quality was stressed in the entry for *manieroso* in the

26 On *maniera*, see Elizabeth Cropper, introduction to Craig Hugh Smyth, *Mannerism and Maniera* (1963, repr. Vienna: Irsa, 1992); S.J. Freedberg, "Observations on the Painting of the Maniera", *Art Bulletin* 47, 2 (June, 1965), 187–197; Summers, "Contrapposto: Style

first edition of the Vocabolario della Crusca (1612) as “chi ha maniera, cioè bel modo di procedere” (“one who has *maniera*, that is, a fine way of doing”).²⁷

Graceful figures are ornate figures, where ornament signifies the movement or turning of a figure, as in Quintilian's frequently quoted analogy between the torsion in the *Discobolos* of Myron and the *figurae dicendi*.²⁸ The analogy is reiterated in the treatises, as in Comanini's comparison of *contrapposto* to antithesis, but we might recall that Quintilian likens figurative language to any displacement of the body from an upright position—an image that associates figural speech primarily with movement.²⁹

As Summers has shown, *contrapposto* and graceful ‘ornaments’ of posture concern qualitative proportion.³⁰ Summers discusses an important theoretical source in Alhazen's *Optics*, which regards beauty as a proportionate conjunction of the “visible intentions”—the qualities which the *virtus distinctiva* of sight uses in forming judgements and inferences, so that cognition arises from vision.³¹ Qualitative proportion entails the presence or implication of

and Meaning in Renaissance Art”, *Art Bulletin* 59, 3 (1977), 336–61; idem, “Maniera and Movement: the Figura Serpentinata”, *Art Quarterly* 35 (1972), 269–301; Svetlana Alpers, “Ekphrasis and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari's Lives”, *JWCI* 23, 3–4 (Jul.–Dec. 1960), 213–14; John Shearman, *Mannerism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967); Eugenio Battisti, “Sfortune del manierismo”, in *Rinascimento e Barocco*, 216–37. Ossola, *Autunno*, 176–78, notes that *maniera* is qualified in Vasari (e.g. *buona maniera*), then is used of an artist's mode of working, becoming with Francesco Bocchi a term for accentuated personal style, as in “peregrine maniere”. *Maniera* will be treated here as a term of Renaissance art criticism, not as a term of expression of spiritual crisis (Hauser) or *zeitgeist* (von Schlosser), nor as a general term for anti-classicism or counter-classicism (Friedländer, Dvořák) in the form of excessive or precious formalism, or of degeneration (Hocke, Curtius, who identifies ‘mannerism’ with excessive ornamentation; see *European Literature*, 273–301, on late antique lit as “mannerist”).

27 Quoted and translated in Freedberg, “Observations”, 188.

28 On Quintilian's analogy between the *Discobolos* and figurative speech, see Shearman, *Mannerism*, 84–85; Summers, *Michelangelo*, 91–92. Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 65, notes that the *Discobolos* was known to the Renaissance only through a limbless torso in the Cesi collection.

29 Comanini, *Il Figino*, TA III, 362, discusses *contraposti* as contraries of sex, age and nature (sea versus land, mountains versus valleys).

30 See Annibale Romei, *Discorsi, Divisi in Sette Giornate (Giornata prima: Della bellezza)* (Verona: Girolamo Discepoli, 1586), 20: “proporzione si trova nelli elementi così nella quantità come nella qualità”; chaos would result if this proportion which orders the elements were altered.

31 Summers, *Judgment*, 153–64. Alhazen lists twenty two “visible intentions”, including ‘common sensibles’ such as magnitude, rest, shape and movement. Alhazen also gives *pulchritudo* as one of the “intentions” although he discusses it chiefly as relation of qualities. Summers notes that Albertus Magnus, *De anima* 2.4.6, understood Alhazen's

contraries; tall implies short, flat implies sharp and so on. This appears in Alberti's account of *varietas* and *copia* in *De pictura* 11.40 as the juxtaposition of diverse qualities (e.g. age-youth) or states (contrasts of posture).³² Danti in his *Trattato delle perfette proporzioni* discusses variety, as a source of beauty that arises from the proportion of unlike, different things.³³ Dolce associates "l'attitudini, la varietà e la (per così dire) energia delle figure".³⁴ Where *varietas* as qualitative proportion is conceived in terms of posture, as *contrapposto*, the 'ornament' and 'perfection' it brings to figures is *energeia*. Underlying the discussion of qualitative proportion there is an Aristotelian conception of change here as the replacement of one quality by a contrary quality (e.g. heat by cold) within an individual substance.

Like the grace which exceeds measure in Vasari and Castiglione, *ornatus* as figural movement goes beyond static proportion to the axial disequilibrium of movement and *contrapposto*. Lomazzo gives the two vertical and horizontal axes of the figure as the "soul"—the central line and origin of movement, recalling Aristotle's identification in *De motu animalium* 9, 702b, of the seat of the soul with the stationary centre which directs movement.³⁵ The movement of *grazia* shows the progression from static equilibrium into change, and actualisation, as stressed in Lomazzo's ontological account of *linea serpentinata* as the ascent of the flame to its heavenly source.

"visible intentions" as a list of common sensibles and that Roger Bacon in *De multiplicatione specierum* places the *virtus distinctiva* with the judging, cogitative faculties.

- 32 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 245–47; Alberti, *De pictura* 11.40, trans. Grayson, 79: "Though variety is pleasing in any 'historia,' a picture in which the attitudes and movements of the bodies differ very much among themselves, is most pleasing of all. So let there be some visible full-face, with their hands turned upwards and fingers raised, and resting on one foot; others should have their faces turned away, their arms by their sides, and feet together, and each one of them should have his own particular flexions and movements. Others should be seated, or resting on bended knee, or almost lying down". See Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Historical Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 133–34; Summers, *Michelangelo*, 76–77 et passim, 327ff. Baxandall, "Gaurino", 200–1, reads Alberti's comments as a statement on *dignitas* and indecorous copiousness based on comparisons with eloquence. Comanini, *Figino*, 363–64, recommends a "sprezzatura artificiosa" and a "nobile negligenza" in order to avoid too obvious a match of contraries, calling an excessively laboured version of Alberti's *varietas* "cosa sconcia et affettatissima . . . una vil diligenza".
- 33 Vincenzo Danti, *Trattato delle perfette proporzioni* (Florence: s. n., 1567), repr. TA I, 234, gives *varietà* as one of the principal causes of beauty in composite things.
- 34 Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino*, 128.
- 35 Summers, *Michelangelo*, 428–29.

Summers argues that a mastery of proportion understood as harmony of qualities had as its end the representation of things perfectly adapted to their ends, as Danti stated, and perfect in their kind, as Condivi claimed that Michelangelo imitated every beautiful thing in its species.³⁶ Varchi spoke of beauty consisting in the grace and charm (*piacenza*) which things have with their proper form—this, in man, being the soul.³⁷ Here the actuality or *energeia* of the ‘lively’ figure comes together with the thing perfect in its kind which actualises the qualities of its species; this becomes in the work and thought of Michelangelo and his followers, such as Danti, the supreme grace of figural movement, the expression of the body, perfect in its kind, as vehicle of the rational soul.³⁸ Danti distinguishes between *ritrarre*—portrayal of a thing as it is seen—and *imitare*, based in qualitative proportion, which gives an idealised representation of a thing in its perfection and recreates the intentional form of nature.³⁹

Danti refers to Aristotle when he likens the *imitare-ritrarre* distinction to that between poetry and history.⁴⁰ In *Poetics*, the “more universal and more philosophical nature of poetry”, lies in its idealised representations of characters’ actions and speech, which Aristotle likens to those of painting.⁴¹

36 Summers, *Michelangelo*, 288–91, 324, 330, on quality as activity of the soul, 383, on the artist representing things perfect in their kind. Danti, *Trattato*, 224–25, 227, defines proportion as the perfection of a composite thing to achieve its end (“la proporzione non è altro, che la perfezzione d’un composto di cose nell’attezza, che se le conviene, per conseguire il suo fine”), and corporeal beauty as the suitability (*attezze*) of parts of the body to their proper activities and their ends: “La bellezza . . . del corpo umano non . . . si vede altrove che nelle perfette attezze ò vero proporzioni di tutte le membra, a tutte le operazioni dell’huomo . . . la bellezza de’membri del corpo humano sarà sempre maggiormente in coloro, che più perfettamente saranno atti al moversi, e per conseguenza à operare secondo il fin loro”. Proportion can be found in any of the categories, but especially in quality (*ibid.*, 234). See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 326–336, on Danti’s qualitative proportion.

37 Varchi, *Libro della beltà e grazia*, TA I, 85, 88.

38 See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 379, on the body in movement as the most splendid ornament.

39 *Ibid.*, 241, 265 on *imitare* as representing the intentional form of nature. Danti speaks of imitation as showing in a single figure the beauties which nature scatters in many men but distinguishes his “qualitative” method, arising from anatomical study, from the difficult and tedious practice of using multiple models in the manner of Zeuxis (*ibid.*, 239–40). Julius Schlosser, *La letteratura artistica; manual delle fonti della storia dell’arte moderna*, (1924, 3rd Italian ed. Scandicci, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1996), 400, notes the rarity of editions of Danti’s treatise.

40 Danti, *Trattato*, 252–53.

41 *Poetics* 1451b. Robortello in *Explicationes* comments on the painting analogy.

Treatise literature fostered such comparisons; Dolce's definition of pictorial *ordine* as sequential development is informed by Aristotle's comments on dramatic sequence.⁴² The discussions above of *ornatus* as figural movement also presuppose that a body has been affected, implying interaction and exemplified by the scenic interaction of narrative painting; theatre analogies also imply the coordination of modes of affection through spectacle, plot and characterisation.⁴³

Poetic universality exhibits probability (*eikos*) and necessity, as opposed to the particularities related by history. This is illustrated by tragedy which represents people as better than they are, and whose plot structure is analysed by Aristotle for its completeness. However, the discussion implies that each genre of art will possess its means of representing things as they should be, appropriate to that kind. Once the *Poetics* comes into wider circulation and commentary from the 1540s, poetics becomes deeply engaged with genre theory, as evidenced by J.C. Scaliger's *Poetices* (1561). Danti's definition of *imitare* thus translates *ethopoieia*, with its delineation of characters or types as they should be into the harmony of qualities which display a thing perfect in its kind. Such analogies appear in antiquity; Dionysius of Halicarnassus discusses grace (*charis*) as the outstanding quality of Lysias, who excelled in the portrayal of character.

Primum in Genere and the Artistic Idea

The thing perfect in its kind takes us into an important theme for the idealisations attributed to *disegno*. This is the *primum in aliquo genere*—the foremost species in a genre which contains all the qualities of all species in that genus. This conception is normally traced back to Scholasticism and the hierarchical arrangement of species in a genus, and is later developed by Ficino.⁴⁴ It also

42 See *Poetics* 1449b7, 1450b2, 1450b12, 1451a4; Dolce, in *Dolce's Aretino*, 272, 276–78. Dolce, like Vasari, praises Raphael for his descriptive and narrative ability, which outshone his literary sources; see *ibid.*, 160; Vasari *Vite* IV, 179.

43 Here we might recollect Landino's description of Masaccio as "puro senza ornato" in the *Proemio al Comento di Dante* (*Scritti* I, 124); in Cinquecento treatises ornament would have referred also to the affective character of the figures through gesture, colour, and *moti*.

44 See Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 28; Dante, *Convivio*, 4,8. On Ficino's use of the *primum in aliquo genere*, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943, repr. Gloucester MA: Columbia Studies in Philosophy, 1964), 146–70. Kristeller comments: "While the *primum*

has a source in Galen's discussion of Polykleitos in *De temperamentis* where he compared the Canon to the artist's search for the most beautiful form in each case, and to the mean within each genus.⁴⁵ Summers invokes it in discussion of the artist's representation of things perfect in their kind, like Danti's *imitare*.⁴⁶ The *primum in aliquo genere* plays a significant role in Renaissance poetics, appearing in genre-based theories as a means of reconciling the demand for idealised representation with variety as poetic ornament, and responding to a negative, ultimately Platonic condemnation of variety as imitation of unworthy objects.⁴⁷ Thus Robortello in his *Explicationes* alludes to the *primum in genere*, to the myth of Zeuxis and to Cicero's idea in response to the Platonic condemnations of poetic *poikilia*.⁴⁸ Genus *qua* genre anchors the decorum of the poetic kinds, while genus *qua* secondary substance allows us to select from the full range of *differentiae* in a genus:

each genre has in itself supreme degrees of decorum and takes on a most complete form without however degenerating from its nature and former image.⁴⁹

The *primum in genere* can also clarify the arguments in Fracastoro's *Naugerius sive de poetica* (1540, posthumous publication 1555), which reworks and

is a particular and privileged member of its genus, at the same time it translates the whole fullness of the universal into reality, and conversely the universal in itself is not placed by thought outside the sphere of existing things but as *primum* it is included among the real objects, without any necessary relation to thought", *ibid.*, 149. See also *ibid.*, 163: "*primum* and Idea are not identical in a formal sense, but in the case of the universal genera the idea has the function of the *primum* and is defined as *primum* in its relation to the lower things". Alexander Koyré and Helmut Kuhn in review of Kristeller, *Journal of Philosophy* 41, 20 (September 1944), 553–60, saw the *primum in genere* as an attempt to graft the Platonic idea onto an Aristotelian conceptual framework.

45 "platae, pictores, statuarii, alii denique fictores, quae pulcherimma in omnium specie sunt, tum pingunt, tum fingunt . . . ad id quod medium est in illa specie collimantes, laudantque homines quandam Polycleiti statuam canonem appellatam". Galen, *De temperamentis libri tres*, trans. Thomas Linacre (Cambridge: John Siberch 1521), E4v.

46 Summers, *Michelangelo*, 324–5.

47 See Clare Guest, "Cicero's *Idea* and the Role of Genre in Renaissance Claims for Poetic Universality" in *The Formation of the Genera in Early European Culture*, ed. C.L. Guest (Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010), 26–57.

48 Robortello, *Explicationes* fol. 182.

49 "unumquodque genus per se supremos quosdam habet decoris gradus, et absolutissimam recipit formam non tamen degenerans à sua natura, et effigie pristina", *ibid.*, fol. 182.

subverts *Phaedrus*.⁵⁰ Naugerius distinguishes poetry from other forms of speech in that it treats things simply and universally as beautiful and perfect, using every ornament and elegance to show and teach the universal idea of speaking well (“simpliciter et per universalem bene dicendi ideam”, 117A).⁵¹ Fracastoro’s discussion is consonant with Varchi’s modal description of poetry (“modo di scriver[e] poeticamente”) in the third part of *Lezzione . . . della maggioranza delle arti*.⁵² Fracastoro does not say that the poet apprehends the transcendent ideas, but the *idea bene dicendi*, the “idea” of speaking well. The ‘beauty’ and ‘universality’ of poetic speech are regulated by genre, governed by decorum, and achieved by the cultivation of all fitting ornament.⁵³

Naugerius is used by Tasso in the *Discorsi del poema epico*, which multiplies Fracastoro’s *idea bene dicendi* into the seven stylistic “ideas” of Hermogenes.⁵⁴

50 *Naugerius* reworks the *locus amoenus* of *Phaedrus* as the scene for ‘inspired’ discourse on literature but flatly denies supernatural agency “non est autem Deus ulla causa illius furoris, sed ipsa musica”, *Naugerius, Opera omnia* (Venice: Giunta, 1574), 117D. On Fracastoro’s sceptical attitude to astral causation, see *Syphilus* 1. 256–60.

51 *Naugerius* 116A “verum ideam sibi . . . faciens liberam et in universum pulchram, dicendi omnes ornatus, omnes pulchritudines quaeret, quae illi rei attribui possunt”; 120D “poetae finem esse delectare et prodesse imitando in unoquoque maxima et pulcherrima per genus dicendi simpliciter pulchrum ex convenientibus. verum ex his universalem quondam fortasse ideam poetae videre datur”.

52 Varchi, *Maggioranza dell arti*, TA 1, 53. Modal definitions of poetry could also draw on the discussion of discursive modes (*modi tractandi*) in Medieval logic; Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics*, 68–70, tabulates the modes in Alexander of Hales’ *Summa Theologica*, Albertus Magnus, Dante, Gentile da Cingoli and Iacopo Gaetani Stefaneschi. Boccaccio in *Genealogia* XIV.6 and *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, 616 ff. uses modes in his comparison of poets as ‘theologians’, to authors of Scripture, noting that poetry and theology are similar in mode, but contrast in content. See Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 388–89.

53 Fracastoro, *Naugerius* 117C “si omnia scribas, et commedia et lyrica et alia, partes erunt poeticae si simpliciter pulchra in eo genere elegeris”.

54 Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico* (1594) in *Prose*, ed. Ettore Mazzali (Milan: Ricciardi, 1959), 502: “a me non può dispiacere in alcun modo che il poeta rimiri ne l’idea de la bellezza; ma se più sono l’idee ne le quali suol drizzar gli occhi l’oratore, com’è piaciuto ad Ermogene, non so perché il poeta debba considerare solamente quella de la bellezza . . . ma peravventura parve al Navagerio che ne la forma de la bellezza fossero comprese tutte le altre, o che il bello fosse in tutte, perciò che ne la chiarezza, ne la grandezza, ne la velocità, ne l’affetto, ne la gravità, ne la verità è il bello”: “I in no way disagree with the idea that the poet should strive for the idea of beauty; but if there are numerous ideas to which the orator raises his eyes, as Hermogenes claimed, I do not see why the poet should consider only that of beauty . . . but perhaps is seemed to Naugerius that all forms were contained in the form of

Tasso's *Discorsi* give magnificent reiteration to the "microcosmic analogue" whose Neoplatonic antecedents Tasso notes:

In this wondrous work of God called the world, we see the great expanse of heaven lovely with varied stars, then descending level by level, the air and the sea, full of birds and fishes, the earth which gives sustenance to so many animals... in which we admire streams, springs, lakes, plains and woods and mountains, here fruit and flowers, there ice and snow, here habitation and culture, there solitude and horrors. And yet, the world which embraces in its bosom such varied things is one, and the knot which holds its parts together in the conjunction of *discors concordia* is one; nothing lacks in it and there is nothing which does not serve necessity and ornament. So it is, I think, with the excellent poet, who is called divine for no other reason than his resemblance in his work to the supreme artificer, and he participates in his divinity, for he can form a poem... that contains such variety of material and one form and soul, in which all things are composed that one part sustains or corresponds to the other so that if a single part is removed or changes place, the whole is destroyed. If this were true, the art of composing a poem would be similar to the structure of the world, composed of contraries, as is music: for if it were not manifold, it would not be a whole, nor would it have a structure, as Plotinus says.⁵⁵

beauty, or that the beautiful was in all, so that in clarity, magnitude, speed, affect, gravity and truth is the beautiful". Tasso invokes the myth of Zeuxis at *Discorsi* I, 459.

- 55 "Sì come in questo mirabile magistero di Dio che mondo si chiama, e 'l cielo si vede sparso e distinto di tanta varietà di stelle e, discendo poi giù di regione in regione, l'aria e 'l mare pieni di uccelli e di pesci, e la terra albergatrice di tanti animali... ne la quale e ruscelli e fonti e laghi e prati e campagne e selve e monti sogliamo rimirare, e qui frutti e fiori, là ghiacci e nevi, qui abitazioni e culture, là solitudine ed orrori, con tutto ciò uno è il mondo che tante e sì diverse cose nel suo grembo rinchiude, una la forma e l'essenza sua, uno il nodo dal quale sono le sue parti con discorde concordia insieme congiunte e collegate, e, non, ancando nulla in lui, nulla però vi è che non serva a la necessità o a l'ornamento: così parimente giudico che da eccellente poeta il quale non per altro è detto divino, se non perchè, al supremo artefice ne le sue operazioni assomigliandosi, de la sua divinità viene a partecipare, un poema formar si possa... quasi... un piccolo mondo... che tanta varietà di materie contegna, una la forma e l'anima sua, e che tutte queste cose sieno di maniera composte che l'una l'altra riguardi, l'una a l'altra corrisponda, sì che una sola parte o tolta via, o mutata di sito, il tutto si distrugga. E se ciò fosse vero, l'arte del comporre il poema sarebbe simile a la ragion de l'universo la quale è composta de'contrari, come la ragion musica: perchè se ella non fosse molteplice, non sarebbe tutta, né sarebbe ragione, come dice Plotino", Tasso, *Discorsi*, in *Prose* ed. 588–89. A version of the passage

Here we see the species and their habitats epitomised into a series of opposing qualities, in keeping with the long tradition of Platonic, Stoic and hexaemeral celebrations of *exornatio mundi*—a tradition to which Tasso himself contributed in his *Il mondo creato* (1592). Tasso however ends his celebration of *concors discordia* with a note of doubt about the cosmic analogy (“if this were true”—“se cio fosse vero”); a poetics centred on the literary microcosm, Tasso implies, would have insufficient theoretical distinction from the descriptions of *musica universalis* in music theory and the questions of discourse and stylistic theory which engage the *Discorsi*.

Tasso’s discussion of stylistic ‘universality’ takes him to Hermogenes’ ideas, which endorsed the combination of stylistic qualities and promoted alignments of stylistic qualities with genre. Tasso developed discussions in Minturno, who dwelt on the importance of establishing which arguments and stylistic qualities are contained in various literary genres, arguing that a poem is more perfect as it employs more qualities: “quel poema esser tenuto ottimo, e perfetto, il cui dire di tutte queste forme di parlare ò pur della più parte è composta”.⁵⁶ The genres possess *forme del parlare*—stylistic specific—taken from Hermogenes, which in turn suppose certain kinds of character and situations in which certain forms are verisimilar or credible. Minturno’s account suggests that decorum resides in genre, and the elevation of one genre over another is related to the number and hierarchy of the forms or specific qualities which it contains, the “poema . . . tenuto ottimo e perfetto” containing them all.

Tasso’s multiplication of generic-stylistic ‘ideas’ is part of an argument for epic as the universal genre of poetry, which contains and ennoble the other stylistic ‘species’.⁵⁷ Tasso can therefore declare in the final discourse that “bellissimo oltre tutti gli altri poemi è l’eroico”,⁵⁸ and states that the decorum

appears first in Tasso’s earlier, shorter treatise in poetics, *Discorsi dell’arte poetica e in particolare sopra il poema eroico*, Discorso 2, in *Prose*, 387.

56 Minturno, *Arte poetica*, 443: “the poem considered best or perfect is that which is composed of all these forms of speaking or the greatest number of them”.

57 In the *Discorsi dell’arte poetica* (1587, but composed probably in the 1560s), as in the second *Discorsi*, Tasso regards poetry as a genus whose species (*spezie*) are tragedy, epic and the other kinds. Tasso discusses epic’s capacity to mix all the Hermogenean forms beyond its proper qualities of magnificence and sublimity in *Discorsi del poema eroico*, *Prose* 683: “la forma sublime e magnifica è proprio dell’eroico, quantunque possa mescolarsi con l’altre”. Epic not only mixes tragic gravity and lyric beauty but improves them “in the splendour of a marvellous majesty”, “non lontano da la gravità del tragico, né da la vaghezza del lirico; ma avanza l’uno e l’altro ne lo splendore d’una meravigliosa maestà” (*ibid.*, 657).

58 *Ibid.*, 693.

of the poem as a whole predominates and elevates that of particular parts or qualities (i.e. individual characters or actions).⁵⁹ This means that humble characters or scenes will partake of the grandeur and magnificence of the general decorum of the work without a loss of propriety.⁶⁰ Tasso sees in Virgil the exemplar of *decoro generale*, whom he contrasts with Homer, criticised for placing decorum in “singular virtues”.⁶¹ The epic thus becomes a *primum in genere*, whose universality brings other species of poems to perfection. Tasso’s universal decorum also recalls Vasari’s discussion of the “beauty carried continuously into every detail, which can show all order with more ornament”.

The *primum in genere* is also used by Scamozzi in *Idea dell'architettura universale* (1615) where it becomes central to the orders and their modular understanding:

in every genus there must be a first and principle [member], which shall be a measure for all that which is contained in the genus.⁶²

Scamozzi’s discussion is based on his view of the order and ornament in all things created and artificially made, so that there are no breaks in the movement from genus to species but rather a continuum of modification as

59 “Elegga fra le cose belle, le bellissime; fra le grandi, le grandissime; fra le maravigliose, le maravigliossime ... a le mediocri aggiunga altezza, a le oscure, notizie e splendore, a le semplici, artificio, a le vere, ornamento, a le false, autorità”: “Amongst beautiful things, choose the most beautiful, amongst the great, the greatest, amongst the wonderful, the most wonderful ... and elevate the mediocre, add note and splendour to the obscure, artifice to the simple, ornament to the true, authority to the false” (ibid., 557).

60 “se per una volta riceve i pastori, i caprari, i porcari e l’altre si fatte persone, deve aver riguardo non solo al decoro de la persona, ma a quello del poema e mostrargli come si mostrano palazzi reali e ne le solennità e ne le pompe”: “if on occasion shepherds, goat-herds or swineherds or other such people appear, consider not only the decorum of the character, but that of the poem, and show them as royal palaces are shown on solemn ceremonies and festivities” (ibid.).

61 Ibid., 608.

62 “in tutti i generi vi dee essere un primo, e principale, il quale sia metro, e misura di tutto quello, che dipende dal medesimo genere”, Scamozzi, *L’idea dell’architettura universale*, Part 1, I.12, 38; cf. Book VI.2, on the module derived from the foot of the column: “Essendo sentenza de’ Savij, che in tutti i generi si ritrova un primo, e principale, il quale dee esser metro, e misura di tutto quello, che si ritrova nel medesimo genere”, *L’idea*, Part 2, 4. Scamozzi uses *ordini* but his discussion makes it clear he considers them as genera and as ‘manners’, where types of building form the ‘genera’, as at *L’idea* III.1.

we ascend from the crudest to the most delicate member of a genus.⁶³ For Scamozzi, the *primum in genere* is a way of asserting the link between nature and art.

The *primum in genere* reconciles the exhortation to cultivate *varietas* and ornament with the species of *ornatus mundi*, with the “universal” representations of poetry and *disegno*, with genre-based decorum and with the synthetic procedures recounted in the myth of Zeuxis. The most significant antique precedent, as Robortello understood, is Cicero’s claim in *Orator* I.9 that the artist’s mental image is a kind of innate Platonic form, which Cicero then identifies with the “ultimam sui generis formam speciemque”, the ultimate form and *species* of its genus. *Species* here could connote figure or outward appearance, given Cicero’s reference in the passage to sculpture, as well as species in the sense of secondary substance.⁶⁴ The artist’s capacity to form universals comes from study illuminated by the light of innate, intellectual forms, and it is this illumination which forms the basis of the elevated status of artists or poets and the myth of their ‘inspired’ character. The allusion to genus or genre clarifies how ornament, associated with species and variation, could be integral to forms and its presence in discussions of idealised figures.⁶⁵ The liveliness and grace which show ornament in figural art should not be identified with rhetorical influence alone; they are nourished by Aristotelian tradition and Platonic influence.

63 Scamozzi, *L'idea*, Part 2, VI.10, 31, “Perciò nel disporre i precetti de gli ordini, osserveremo così nel tutto de’ loro corpi, come anco nelle loro parti, e membra, che dall’uno all’altro vadino di grado, in grado incominciando dalla sodezza dell’Ordine Toscano, e passando ne gli altri, fino, che si pervenghi alla delicatezza, e leggiadria del Corinto; imitando in questo la Natura, la quale, tanto ne’ corpi animate, quanto anco nelle piante, mantiene semore di grado in grado la propria spacie, nè mai transmutata in uno istante la forma ò il numero, over il sito, ò di materia le parti essenziali . . . ma insensibilmente và alterando alcune particelle trà quelle . . . il che indubitamente debbiamo far anco noi ne gli Ordini dell’Architettura”. In the *Architectura* of Wendel Dietterlin (1598) each of the orders is elaborated through degrees of rusticity to refinement, as though to leave no void in the representational continuum. See Scamozzi, *L'idea*, Part 2, VI.5, 15, on the use of the orders, and of ornaments, which again has *exornatio mundi* as a model. On Scamozzi’s discussion of natural species see Payne, *Architectural Treatise*, 235.

64 Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary* 1879, impr. 1969, s.v. *species* II.A.3 quotes the passage in support of the meaning of *species* as idea or notion, a thing seen by the mind.

65 See Spini’s insistence on the orders, identified with architectural ornament, as “species” or “manners”. Spini speaks of nature as adorning everything with beauty and ornament insofar as “each thing in its genus can bear them” (*Libri*, 60). Like Danti, Spini sees the object of imitation as the intentional form of nature (*ibid.*, 71).

This is especially relevant to artistic discussion of the term *idea*, for which *Orator* 1.9 is seminal. The discussion is a cornerstone for claims for the innate intellectual vision of the artist, typified by the “divine” Michelangelo whose idealised invention and conspicuous *difficoltà* communicated his *disegno* even to ornamental fantasies, like those of the New Sacristy at San Lorenzo, praised by Vasari for their “new order of ornament” which broke with antique practice and precept.⁶⁶

The Ciceronian *idea* as the “ultimate form and *species* of a genus”, with the implication of variety explored and synthesised in the creation of universals, is also inscribed in the critical tradition on Raphael as ‘universal’ and ‘ideal’ artist, exemplary in the abstraction of sensuous detail, whose *Galatea* purportedly played with the myth of Zeuxis and the innate *idea*.⁶⁷

However, the term *idea* in Cinquecento treatises does not only refer to forms innate in the intellect, but the place or faculty where forms are invented—identified often with the fantasy.⁶⁸ In Vasari’s formulation of *disegno* the term

66 Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* XXIII (1532 ed.) launches the *divino* epithet with his line “Michel, più che mortale, Angel divino”; see Roskill, *Dolce’s* Aretino, 172, for comparison of Michelangelo to Dante and Raphael to Petrarch. Dolce’s associates *grazia* with Petrarch and Raphael, see *ibid.*, 176.

67 See *ibid.*, 202, for Dolce’s letter to Gasparo Ballini where he invokes the variety which imitates nature in his preference of Raphael over Michelangelo. On Raphael’s universality, see *ibid.*, 160; Bellori, *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte nelle camere del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano* (1695), 61–2, in John Pope-Hennessy, *Raphael* (London: Phaidon, 1970), 35. For the critical tradition on Raphael, see *ibid.*, *Raphael*, 9–37; on Raphael’s intellectual art, see André Chastel, “Amor sacro e profano nell’arte e nel pensiero di Raffaello”, in *Raffaello a Roma, Il convegno del 1983* ed. C.L. Frommel and Matthias Winner (Rome: Edizioni dell’Elefante, 1986), 3–10. Hall, *Colour and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90, calls Raphael’s use of colour an “abstraction for the sake of idealisation”. The letter attributed to Raphael and addressed to Castiglione alludes to the innate artist’s ‘*idea*’ in the *Galatea*, invented from a “*certa idea che mi viene nella mente*”. See Vincenzo Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti nelle testimonianze dei contemporanei e nelle letteratura del suo secolo* (Vatican City: Pontificia Insigne Accademia dei Virtuosi al Pantheon, 1936, repr. Farnborough: Gregg International, 1971), 30ff, who dates the letter to 1514, and attributes to it Aretino; Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources 1483–1602* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 734–41, who judges Castiglione to be the author and dates it after Raphael’s death as a “portrait” of his mind; Barkan, “Heritage”.

68 See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 229–33. Danti, *Trattato*, 221, speaks of the mind of the artist composing a form in the “*idea*”. Lomazzo, “Composizione delle forme nella *idea*”, *Trattato*, VI.64, advises artists to refrain from the distraction of looking at actual things. Vasari speaks of “*disegno e architettura nella idea*” in his response to Varchi’s *paragone* debate

idea appears twice, in reference to universal judgement and description of the 'place' in the mind where it is produced.⁶⁹ Lomazzo speaks of the subjects which "are instilled in the idea of the man whom nature has made a painter", and calls pictorial invention "the development of all things which can fall under the imagination".⁷⁰ Scamozzi typifies the mixed allusion to concept and imaginative faculties when he states that the architect must have in his "idea" the genera of buildings, the species of their parts plus details of sites.⁷¹ Varchi's Michelangelo *Lezione* opens with the idea, form, species, exemplar or exemplum defined as "that image which everyone forms in the fantasy every time he wants to do something".⁷² Varchi even identifies the fantasy or imagination with the passive intellect and with cogitation, claiming that it discourses and separates as the intellect does, but at the level of particulars, not universals.⁷³ This line of thought will be developed in Zuccari's account of *disegno* in *Idea*. Lomazzo similarly associated formation of images in the *idea* and understanding in the intellect.⁷⁴ The association of cogitation, imagination and idea appears also in Pino, who states that the painter's imaginings must

(TA I, 61); cf. *ibid.*, 71 for the response to Varchi of "Maestro Tasso": "avendo [il pittore] nella idea sua una invenzione". In a poem dedicated to Sebastiano del Piombo, Francesco Berni mockingly calls Michelangelo "the very *idea* of sculpture and sculpture and architecture", whose appearance in Berni's *fantasia* prompts him to burn incense and attach votive offerings; see Stephen Campbell, "Fare una cosa morta parer viva: Michelangelo, Rosso and the (Un)divinity of Art", *Art Bulletin* 84, 4 (Dec. 2002), 598–99.

- 69 Panofsky, *Idea*, 61–63, notes that Vasari has no conception in the passage of the idea as innate.
- 70 Lomazzo, *Idea*, 207: "le quali infondono nella idea di quello che la natura ha fatto pittore"; "l'invenzione che nella pittura è proprio la esplicazione di tutte le cose che possono cadere sotto l'immaginazione".
- 71 Scamozzi, *L'idea dell'architettura universale* I.9. The claim is repeated at I.24, and at I.25.
- 72 "quale immagine che si forma ciascuno nella fantasia, ogni volta che vuole fare che che sia", *Lezione sopra un sonetto di Michelangelo* repr. SAC II, 1323. Cf. *ibid.*, 1328 where Varchi equates "conceita nella mente" with "immaginata nella fantasia"; 1330 on the idea, exemplar or model as the form or image that we have in the fantasy of what we intend to do. On Varchi's *Lezioni*, see Leatrice Mendelsohn, *Paragoni Benedetto Varchi's Due Lezzioni and Cinquecento Art Theory* (Ann Arbor: UMI 1982).
- 73 See *Lezione sopra un sonetto di Michelangelo*, SAC II, 1337, where he asserts that *intelletto* in Michelangelo's sonnet should be understood as "immaginazione, o vero fantasia", stipulating that it can combine, divide and discourse like the rational soul, but at the level of particularity; identification with the passive intellect and cogitation appears at 1338.
- 74 Lomazzo, *Idea*, 283: "Quanto più elle si guardano, più vi si trova dentro la bellezza conforme di punto all'immaginazione che si formano nell'Idea, e compresero con l'intelletto"; "the more we look at these [paintings], the more we find in them beauty corresponding

be presented by the other internal senses to the “idea”, so the intellect understands in its own terms what is proposed.⁷⁵

The presence of the imagination in the idea suggests the unique talent or *ingenium* of the artist, and thus the individuality of manner.⁷⁶ The idea as used in the treatises could in short promote the ideality of the artist’s figures while simultaneously accounting for their unique qualities.⁷⁷ Thus Lomazzo in his *Idea del tempio della pittura* declares that there has been no artist who has combined and synthesised all the *maniere*.⁷⁸ Bellori’s celebrated comments at the opening of the *Life* of Annibale Carracci, on artificers who abandoned the study of nature and spoilt art with “maniera, o vogliamo dire, fantastica Idea” associates idea, manner and fantasy succinctly.⁷⁹

Cristoforo Sorte in the *Osservazioni nella pittura* (1580) speaks of the “Idea” as a “celeste ammaestramento” infused by the heavens, which confers unique gifts on all.⁸⁰ Sorte says that painters view their images as their “children” since they regard them as deriving from their “Idea”, and that the images of some painters therefore show melancholy, others liveliness.⁸¹ Sorte, like Lomazzo, regards the individual talent and temperament of the artist as determined astrologically. Again idea is used to reconcile processes of idealisation and universal judgement (the planets are holders of the forms which they transmit) with the unique character of the artist’s imagination. The association of the idea with temperament as well as intellect appears also in Romano Alberti who speaks of artists as melancholy because they keep “fantasmi fissi

exactly to the imaginary image which [artists] form in their idea and understood by the intellect”.

75 Pino, *Dialogo*, 107, discussed in Ossola, *Autunno*, 42.

76 See Dolce, TA 1, 171 on the *ingegno* as source of the “varietà e . . . energia delle figure”. See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 197, on the identification of idea with *fantasia*, so that the idea becomes “the inner light of the artist, which illuminated experience in a unique and characteristic way, hence its association with *maniera*”.

77 Daniele Barbaro in *Della eloquenza*, 13–14, speaks of the writer forming images of the effects he wishes to produce in the imagination, and formed according to the “ideas” of style of Hermogenes.

78 Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura*, 325. Lomazzo envisages the most perfect paintings to be an Adam with the *diseño* of Michelangelo and the colour of Titian, an Eve with the *diseño* of Raphael and the colour of Correggio (ibid., 153).

79 Gian Pietro Bellori, *Vite dei pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1821), I, 21.

80 Cristoforo Sorte, *Osservazioni nella pittura* (Venice: Girolamo Zenaro, 1580) repr. in TA 1, 299, quoted in Ossola, *Autunno*, 77.

81 Sorte, ibid.

nell'intelletto", as does Pino, who says that painting keeps artists quiet and melancholy, with "virtù naturali fisse nell'idea".⁸²

Related to these uses is that of idea as a title word. Scamozzi's *L'Idea dell'architettura universale* labours the universal aspiration of the work, but also suggests a usage close to the theatre-topos: an encyclopaedic display of the contents of a subject, which employs diagrams, plans and figures to achieve clarity. Other authors who use "idea" as a title word, such as Camillo, Lomazzo and Zuccari do so with an eye to its Platonic significance, as Zuccari carefully distinguishes "ideas" in their proper, transcendent sense as form in the mind of God from human concept-making, discussed as *disegno*.⁸³ Zuccari's detailed hierarchy of internal and external *disegno*, where *disegno* takes the place of Aristotelian *hexis* or *habitus*, can be seen as an attempt to reorder the confusion created by the conflation of image-making and conceptual levels.⁸⁴ In Camillo, Lomazzo, Zuccari and Scamozzi, the conceptual universality of the idea co-exists with allusion to the visual in the treatise's content or its (quasi) mnemonic form, or both. This appears in Zuccari's *Idea* 1.3 where he calls *disegno* the object by means of which the intellect knows the things represented in it, likening it to mirror.⁸⁵

The conflation of imagination and intellect created by ambiguous uses of idea is reflected in Comanini's *Il Figino overo del fine della pittura* (1591) where fantastic representations are said to exist solely in the intellect of the artist, "la fantastica di cose che hanno solamente l'essere nell'intelletto dell'imitante".⁸⁶

82 Pino, *Dialogo*, 135. Romano Alberti, *Trattato della nobiltà della pittura* (Rome: Francesco Zannetti, 1585, repr. TA III, 195–235), 209; at 208 Romano Alberti notes the role of fantasy in abstracting images, transforming them into phantasms and 'reducing' them to the intellect.

83 Zuccari, *L'Idea*, 1.5, 11–12. On the fluidity of the "idea" in the Cinquecento treatises see Ossola, *Autunno*. Panofsky, *Idea*, 66, n. 72 remarks on the use of 'idea' in late Renaissance titles. Ludovico Domenichi in his introduction to Camillo's *Idea del Theatro* (Florence: Torrentino, 1550), A2r, speaks of "una Idea, o vogliam dire modello" of the theatre.

84 Zuccari's colleague at the Accademia di San Luca, Romano Alberti, compares the painter's artistic expression of his "concetto" with the theologian's or orator's use of writing and the mathematician's use of instruments (Romano Alberti, *Trattato*, 207). For Varchi's identification of image-formation and concept-making, see *Lezione sopra un sonetto di Michelangelo*, SAC II, 1328.

85 Zuccari, *L'Idea* 1.3, 10. The *fantasia* is called a treasure chest (*scrigno*) at I.11, 33 and its combinatory powers stressed. In the same discussion, Zuccari identifies the estimative and cogitative senses, attributed to animals and humans respectively.

86 Comanini, *Il Figino*, 274; cf. 256 on the artist who uses fantastic imitation when he designs *capricci* not invented by anyone else.

Thus he praises Arcimboldo's *Flora* and *Vertumnus* as inventions which are in no one else's intellect.⁸⁷ Comanini says that Arcimboldo works with images or species received by the fantasy but by combination makes his *capricci*, distinguishing between the fantasy as a receiver of forms and its combinatory powers.⁸⁸

Comanini also illustrates the rehearsal of Plato's eikastic-fantastic distinction, employed by Iacopo Mazzoni in his introduction to the *Difesa di Dante*, where Mazzoni praises fantastic imitation as giving perfect poetry. Comanini turns this distinction to a sister-arts argument, as fantastic imitation is said to please more in poetry, eikastic imitation more in painting. Comanini shows the tendency seen in Varchi to see images as mental representations of our intentions and conceptions, using the term *idolo* in his discussion of fantastic mimesis.⁸⁹ Comanini's eikastic-fantastic distinction regards the question of whether the *idolo* has a referent (like a portrait) or whether it is a production of the fantasy.⁹⁰ What is instantly striking is that the fantastic mimesis of *Sophist*, which concerned the trickery of illusion, features in Comanini as capricious invention whose lack of external referent is obvious. Comanini's exemplar for fantastic imitation is Arcimboldo, whose *Flora* and *Vertumnus* prompt quotation of madrigals and a poem composed by Comanini. The *Flora* madrigal however concerns the relation between collected particulars and universal concept (Flora personified) comprising the totality of all individuals in the species; again the fantasy is close to the species and universal concept (or "idea").⁹¹

Mazzoni's elevation of fantastic over eikastic imitation, which so concerned Tasso in the second of the *Discorsi del poema eroico*, and Comanini's confidence that fantastic and eikastic can be combined, show the strength of sophistic concepts of art.⁹² Like Tasso, the Platonist Francesco Patrizi reproved Mazzoni

87 Ibid., 257.

88 Ibid., 270.

89 Ibid., 252: "ciascuno che parli faccia idolo del concetto della sua mente".

90 Ibid., 254. The question of whether an image of an existing thing can be termed an *idolo* is disputed in the dialogue by the prelate Martinengo, who denies delight as the end of poetic imitation.

91 The poem on *Vertumnus* concerns the *concors discordia* of ugliness and beauty ("qual brutezza/Avanzi ogni bellezza") and the change of elements into one another as well as an extended praise of the species figured in *Vertumnus* (see *ibid.*, 258–64).

92 See *ibid.*, 256 where the poet imitates "icastically" when he represents things formed by nature and fantastically when he depicts "un suo capriccio" not invented by anyone else. At *ibid.*, 285–86 the poet is said to be passive when he imitates icastically but brings greater delight and pleases more when he imitates fantastically "quando lavora

for his identification of the poet and sophist, but Patrizi, like Comanini, endorsed fabulous invention, ascribing it even to the sacred Muses.⁹³ Patrizi's *Poetica* rejects mimesis and insists on *furor* as the origin of poetry; the Muses' fabrications illustrate the plastic, transfiguring character of poetic speech but also recall the transformative possibilities of the topics.⁹⁴ From the origins of poetry in *furor* Patrizi develops a poetics of wonder (*meraviglia*) whose topical sources he tabulates.⁹⁵ Patrizi's topical poetics of *meraviglia* replaces his earlier attempt to align the poetic genres with the Muses as heavenly Sirens whose influences the soul receives as it descends to generation in *Discorso della diversità dei furori poetici* (1553). Like other astrological accounts of artistic talent, the treatise attempts to link the diversity of gifts or *ingegno*, whereby various poets excel in different genres (and their stylistic qualities) with a transcendent account of form; it however is unable to account for the status and

d'invenzione e fabbrica fantastici simulacri". Tasso, *Prose*, 524–29, reproves Mazzoni for his description of poetry as the most ancient species of sophistic. Tasso's insistence that (epic) poetry is not fantastic but imitates things which are, were or can be (527) recalls Vitruvius' critique of the *grottesche* as showing things which are not and cannot be; the sophist is again described as the maker of things which cannot be.

- 93 See *La deca ammirabile*, in *Della poetica*, ed. Aguzzi-Barbagli, II, 239, 276–82; Patrizi insists that the two types of mimesis in *Sophist* refer to imitation of external objects, and the 'idols' created by fantastic mimesis are thus distinct from those created in the fantasy of the poet, such as mythical creatures; the eikastic-fantastic imitation discussion of *Sophist* 235d–236c is inapplicable to poetry. Patrizi also argues that the *ut pictura poesis* analogy would elevate imitation of individuals over imitation of kinds and thus subvert the more universal and philosophical nature of poetic representation.
- 94 See *ibid.*, 239: "il fingere favole fu corrispondente al vanto delle Muses, e alla possanza loro . . . quasi a rifabricarsi il mondo, con crearsi di nulla cose nuove favoleggiando, e di poco seme generandone e corrompendole a loro piacimento, e accrescendole e diminuendo, e in mille modi alterandole e trasformando, e componendone di contrarie, e que e là traspondendole e trasportando. Che sono, come da poi si averà a vedere, i fonti delle favole e delle poetiche finzioni"; "The making of fables corresponded to the Muses' boast and their power . . . to refashion the world, as it were, creating new things from nothing with stories, and from a small seed generating and corrupting them at their pleasure—and in a thousand ways altering them and transforming them, composing them from contraries, transposing and transporting them. These things are, as we shall see, the sources of fables and poetic fictions".
- 95 Aguzzi-Barbagli considers the *Deca ammirabile* the first systematic attempt to construct a poetics of the marvellous (*Della poetica* I, xv). For the topical sources of *meraviglia* in *Deca ammirabile*, see *Della poetica* II, 311–27; Patrizi calculates 33, 600 sources of *meraviglia* but explains that this number excludes further accidents and topics, and that the number of sources is actually infinite.

definition of mixed genre and Patrizi turns to topical invention in the longer *Della poetica*.⁹⁶

The reciprocity of sophistic and ontological definitions of art in Renaissance treatises appears in Varchi's *Lezzione*, Disputa 2, where painting is termed "sostistica".⁹⁷ Varchi's preoccupations with the relative merits of the arts show the potential for two diverse accounts of art to develop. Varchi links sculpture with imitation of substance, painting with accidents and the trickery of vision.⁹⁸ Here the notions of artistic invention rooted in Aristotelian conceptions of actualisation compete with art as reflection by sophistic means (surface appearances, variety and colour) of the "macchina del mondo".⁹⁹ Pino similarly lists amongst art's virtues the "poetry" which makes you see the sky adorned with the sun, stars, weather and seasons; the cosmic ornament of the heavens is mixed with unstable effects.¹⁰⁰ Varchi's reflections are the first in a series of artistic theories where the sophistic, fantastic aspects of art are contrasted with its capacity to make exemplary images.

However, *energeia* in art is not only a criterion rooted in Aristotelian metaphysics; it is also central to a sophistic tradition of descriptions of artworks. Writers of the Second Sophistic, the epigrammatists of the *Greek Anthology* or poets describing artworks in ekphrastic passages comment on the liveliness of a statue which 'animates' its matter or the painting which deceives the eye as a way of indicating the praise of the artwork. Summers argued that the view of artificial illusion as ornament developed from ancient discussions of artistic illusion into medieval poetics and the early artistic treatises influenced by them, like Cennino Cennini.¹⁰¹

The *energeia* which habitually forms the chief praise of artworks is the 'ornament' of the artefact and simultaneously a literary ornament in its description, a point which is almost laboured in sophistic writings such as the *Imagines* of Philostratus and Callistratus. Vasari's comments about figures which seem to speak and breathe are descriptions of the achievements of Renaissance artists

96 Patrizi attempts to account for mixed genre by awkward devices such as invocation of multiple Muses, or a *primum in genere* account of Calliope as the supreme Muse who contains in herself the qualities of all the others; see *Discorso della diversità*, repr. in *Della poetica* III, 458–61.

97 Varchi, *Lezzione*, in TA III, 41.

98 *ibid.*, 41, 52.

99 *Ibid.*, 41, 45–52.

100 Pino, *Dialogo*, 106.

101 Summers, *Michelangelo*, especially Chapters 2, 7.

and fit into a long tradition of praising art for its actuality, whether or not Vasari is argued to have consciously located himself within it.¹⁰²

Colour

So far we have considered how ornament moves ‘within’ figures, showing the *energeia* and grace which exhibits an individual manner, synthesised from the artist’s universal judgements. From a rhetorical viewpoint, affect is enhanced as figures become more graceful and lively, their gestures and colours more varied. Gilio discusses the accidents which can be varied with the judgement of the artist as the *aggiunti* which “fanno ornamento a la pittura”.¹⁰³ Hills notes that non-descriptive colour is termed *ornamento* in fifteenth century contracts.¹⁰⁴

Rhetorical comparisons, like formal essentialism, promoted a view of colour as ornament and superficial; Mitrović observes the subordination of colour to conceptual essence in the most ambitious claims for *disegno*, those of Zuccari.¹⁰⁵ This subordination had ancient philosophical roots in discussions of the accidental nature of colour, stressed in so influential a work as Boethius’ commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* V.10 and V.24.¹⁰⁶ The role of the combinatory imagination in *disegno* means that the artist can produce forms of any kind, with colour secondary to potentially unlimited formal invention.¹⁰⁷ The influence of rhetoric in discussion of colour led to analogies in the treatises

102 See Svetlana Alpers, “*Ekphrasis* and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari’s *Lives*”, *JWCI* 23 (1960), 190–215; on the *Vite*, Patricia Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). On descriptions of artworks as an element in Byzantine descriptive exercises (*progymnasmata*) derived from Second Sophistic, see Baxandall, “Gaurino”.

103 Gilio, *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de’ pittori circa l’istorie*, in TA II, 26.

104 Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 105.

105 Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 160–61. Gage, *Colour and Meaning*, 69, notes the derivation of *chrōma* from *chrōs*, skin, and Philoponus’ commentary on Aristotle, *Meteorologia* I, 47.18, where he denies that colour indicates substance. Cf. Paleotti, *Discorso* 1.19 who distinguishes between resemblance as the soul of the painting and “vaghezza, varietà de’ colori et altri ornamenti” as accessory, “accessorie”. On the “inessential” nature of colour in sixteenth century discussions, see David Freedberg, “The failure of colour”, in *Sight and Insight. Essays on Art and Culture in honour of E.H. Gombrich*, ed. John Onians (London: Phaidon, 1994), 245–262.

106 Boethius, *Commentary on Porphyry’s Isagoge*, CSEL 48, 313, 346–47.

107 See Varchi’s assertion at the opening of the *Lezione sopra un sonetto di Michelangelo*, in SAC II, 1322–23, that the artist can imagine all perfect forms as potentialities in matter.

with *elocutio* and to the sophistic theme of the delights of illusion, especially in depiction of changing appearances.¹⁰⁸ We shall consider the treatises here, rather than the changes in optical study by artists, such as the study of Leonardo's optics by the Florentine Accademia del Disegno and its impact on late Renaissance and early Baroque painting.¹⁰⁹

In Medieval rhetoric the colours of speech were a major part of *ornatus facilis*, which also included figures of speech and thought, letter transpositions and grammatical determinations.¹¹⁰ Alan of Lille compared the 'coloured' speech of Sidonius, shining with stars and jewels, to a peacock's tail.¹¹¹

The correspondences between colour and *elocutio* are nourished by its association with *varietà* and the rhetorical topos of clothing for style, clothing being a major area for deployment of colour harmonies.¹¹² Dolce compares colour in painting to the selection of words in poetry, recommending *sprezzatura* in colouring.¹¹³

He and Pino provide a three-part description of painting: invention, design and colour, recalling the rhetorical invention-disposition-style triad.¹¹⁴ Pino, like Vasari, exalts the intellectual character of *disegno* and the understanding of creation which renders painting a liberal art, whereas colour is associated

108 Dionysius of Halicarnassus talks of "colours of speech" with a sophistication that suggests it was already well-developed in Hellenistic literary theory.

109 See Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*, second edition (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2000), 11–14, on the effects of study of Leonardo's optics in the Florentine Accademia on Cigoli, the Carracci, Domenichino and Poussin. Dempsey, *ibid.*, 25, claims that his book is an effort to examine the neglected area of *colore*, outshone by *disegno*.

110 See Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle*, 86–98.

111 "Illic Sidonii trabeatus sermo refulgens/Sidere multiplici splendet gemmisque colorum/Lucet et in dictis depictus pavo resultat", PL 210, col. 513, quoted Faral, *Arts poétiques*, 92.

112 Bernardino Daniello, *Della poetica* (Venice: Nicolini da Sabio, 1536, repr. in Weinberg ed., *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento* 1, Bari: Laterza, 1970), 275, described *elocutio* in poetry as "parole e colori da vestirla", "words and colour to dress poetry", quoted in Ossola, *Autunno*, 45.

113 Dolce, *Osservazioni nella volgar lingua*, 1550 (Venice: Giolito, 1554), 182, quoted in Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino*, 267; on *sprezzatura* in colouring, see *ibid.*, 156. Cf. Raffaele Borghini, *Il Riposo* (1584, repr. Milan: Società Tipografica, 1807), I, Book I, 58 which uses a rhetorical-style five part division of painting: invention, disposition, attitudes, members (*membri*), colouring.

114 Dolce discusses the secondary role of colour to invention and *disegno* in the letter to Gasparo Ballini, in Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino*, 206–8; see however his letter about Titian's "poesia" *Venus and Adonis* to Alessandro Contarini on the equality of *disegno* and colour, Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino*, 214.

with the imputed mechanical character of painting.¹¹⁵ Paleotti, adducing a Horatian teach-move-delight structure for painting as for rhetoric, associates pulchritude in painting with *vaghezza dei colori*; the association of colour with delight and variety, and with the delights of poetic variation, appears also in Armenini.¹¹⁶ Such delight could be viewed negatively, as Tasso in *Il Minturno, o vero de la bellezza* criticises Petrarchan discussions of beauty where various colours and appearances are praised, likening their view of beauty to a chameleon.¹¹⁷ Bellori in *L'idea* associates popular appreciation of art, founded in ignorance and opinion, with pleasure in colour, as opposed to the intellectual understanding which considers form. This link between colour, affect and vulgar pleasure has a source in the disparagement of chromatic music and its unmanning effects in Plato or Clement of Alexandria.¹¹⁸ Such analogies between colour and musical modes appear in positive form in Comanini's account of Arcimboldo's creation of tonal modes and colour harmonies which were then transposed musically into madrigals.¹¹⁹

Musical analogies underlie Marcia Hall's *Colour and Meaning*, which discusses Cinquecento colouring as the development and choice of modes.¹²⁰ The four modes she describes—*sfumato*, *chiaroscuro*, *unione* (concerned with colour harmonies, typified by Raphael) and *cangiante*, exemplified by the

115 Pino, *Dialogo*, 107.

116 Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, 1.12; at 1.9 colouring is associated with grace ("il colorire con grazia"). Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura*, ed. Marina Gorreri (Turin: Einaudi, 1988) 125. The discussion moves from poetry-painting to musical harmony-colour harmony.

117 Tasso, *Il Minturno, o vero de la bellezza* in *Opere* (Florence: Tartini e Franchi, 1729), III, 419: "il bello sarà trasmutabile, e a guise di camaleonte prenderà diversi colori, diverse forme e diverse imagini e apparenze".

118 For discussion of Plato's reflections on the effects of "slack" and "sweetened" modes in *Republic* 398d–e; 411a–c; *Laws* 800a–e, see Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39–42. For Clement's condemnation of the "florid and meretricious" harmonies of chromatic music, see *Paedagogus* II, Chapter 4 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* II, 249. For a more neutral comparison between harmony and colour, see Zarlino, *Le Istitutioni harmoniche* (1558), quoted in Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 273.

119 Comanini, *Figino*, 368–70, relates how Arcimboldo created tonal 'modes' by mixing black and white in harmonic proportion; these were followed by colour harmonies where the progression of hues was determined by the shadow that each hue created. Arcimboldo's colour 'harmonies' were 'transposed' to the clavicembalo in the form of madrigals by the imperial musician, Mauro Cremonese.

120 Hall, *Colour*, Chapter 3 ff.

Sistine vault, which Hall terms “frankly artificial”, with “an obviously ornamental and unreal aura”.¹²¹ Hall discusses the combinations or selections of colour ‘modes’ for expressive purposes, as seen in the provocatively anti-naturalistic colouring of the Mannerists, where colour and lighting could be at odds with one another or with the scene depicted.¹²² Such separation suggests analogies to developments in Cinquecento poetics: the totality of the artwork becomes complex, composed of analogies between the various levels of invention, design and style.

Dolce identifies invention with *favola* or *istoria*, *disegno* with form and colour responds to the colour with which nature paints and diversifies creation according to species—an allusion to *exornatio mundi*.¹²³ The allusion appears emphatically in Vasari when he extols painting for showing each element with the *ornato* and the excellence that nature gives, listing the properties and creatures of air, water, earth plus buildings.¹²⁴ The excellences and *ornato* of the elements also include fleeting impressions, like meteorological effects and reflections in water, as Varchi also notes.¹²⁵ In his second *Maggioranza . . . delle arti* lecture colour’s role in depicting the *macchina del mondo* is linked with the

121 Ibid., 95. Hall sees the *cangiante* mode as followed by Mannerist painters.

122 Hall, *ibid.*, notes that Raphael changed his mode of colouring to suit the needs of a composition; the *Transfiguration* shows *unione* and *cangiante* in the upper section, intense chiaroscuro in the lower part (*ibid.*, 115). Ossola, *Autunno*, 178, quotes Francesco Bocchi on Pontormo’s San Lorenzo decorations, where soft delicate colouring worked against disordered composition. Pontormo in such works as the *Deposition* Capponi Chapel, Santa Felicità, Florence, decomposes the naturalistic unity between colour, form and invention, and challenges the beholder to relate them again harmoniously.

123 See Varchi, *Maggioranza delle arti*, Disputa II, 38–39, for rehearsal of the link between colour and the painter’s depiction of the *macchina del mondo*.

124 Vasari, *Vite* I, 23–24: “la pittura non lascia element alcuno che non sia ornato e ripieno di tutte le eccellentie che la natura ha dato loro, dando la sua luce o le sue tenbre alla aria con tutte le sue varietà et impressioni, et empiendola insieme di tutte le sorti degli uccelli; alle acque la trasparenza, i pesci, i muschi, le schiume, il variare delle onde, le navi e l’altre sue passioni; alla terra i monti, i piani, le piante, i frutti, i fiori, gli animali, gli edifizii, con tant moltitudine di cose e varietà delle forme loro e de’veri colori che la natura stessa molte volte n’ha maraviglia”. Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 54, notes the echo of William of Conches—i.e. of the hexaemeral tradition in the passage. Borghini, *Il Riposo* I, 1–3, opens with celebration of the wonder of the *exornatio mundi* followed by account of planets and their influences which include Cabalistic terminology.

125 Varchi, *Maggioranza dell arti*, Disputa II, 37 expands Pliny’s praise of Apelles’ painting of thunder and lightning to include air, smoke, breath, clouds, echoes, colours of water, sweat and foam amongst the things which painting can depict. Cf. Bartolomeo Vitali’s letter to Cristoforo Sorte in the preface to Sorte’s *Osservazioni*, 275, which lists the variety

deceiving character of vision, the insubstantial nature of images in water and so the 'sophistic' nature of painting.¹²⁶ In the responses to Varchi's *paragone* debate, colour is central to painting's capacity to depict transient, accidental things such as weather changes, mist, clouds, smoke or breath.¹²⁷

If colour is accidental, it also provides the illusion of change and life. Plutarch in *On how to study poetry* (*Moralia* 16c) notes that colour adds liveliness and illusion, comparable to the delight created by falsity and fantasy in poetry.¹²⁸ Renaissance innovations in colouring advanced the old Augustinian paradox about art and its sophistic nature: the more false it is, the more truly itself it is.¹²⁹ Zuccari associates the "truth" of painting's deceit specifically with colouring, shading and lighting.¹³⁰ Dolce's list of things which seem to live if properly coloured includes humans, animals and plants as well as renditions of rocks, lights, weather effects, textiles and lustre on metals.¹³¹ Lomazzo notes that colour shows the *differentiae* between creatures as well as showing spirit and affections which make things seem real.¹³² Such associations between colour, the 'painting' of nature and the deceiving illusion of life appear in the early Renaissance, as in Ciriaco of Ancona's praise of a Netherlandish triptych with a central *Deposition* in the collection of Lionello D'Este in 1449 which reads like a string of sophistic literary clichés: breathing faces, coloured garments enhanced with gold and purple, delightful landscape and luxurious buildings.¹³³ The illusion of living faces recalls Alberti's claims for painting in *De pictura* and Ciriaco's own claims for antiquarian study which could return things dead to life; *istoria*, study of antiquities and illusion are linked.¹³⁴

of flowers and plants, the colours of flesh, waters and clothes and the effects of dawn, night, sea storms and fire amongst the excellences of painting.

¹²⁶ Varchi, *Maggioranza delle arti*, 41–52.

¹²⁷ See *ibid.*, 61, 63, 68, for the responses of Vasari and Pontormo. Hall, *Colour and Meaning*, 68, contrasts Leonardo's use of colour to depict the fleeting character of appearances with Medieval rendering of 'pure' colour.

¹²⁸ Cf. Plato, *Statesman* 277b–c. Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 16, comments on the increase in colour words in Latin in the first century CE from five to sixteen.

¹²⁹ See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 48 et passim for discussion. Cf. Comanini, *Figino*, 244: "Così 'l vero col finto, / Che 'l ver rimanea vinto / dal falso, che del ver più ver pareva".

¹³⁰ Zuccari, *L'idea*, II.6, 95.

¹³¹ Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino*, 154. Amongst the liveliness achieved by colour he includes the fable of the form made by chance: Protogenes' hurling of a sponge at a painting of a horse which produces the illusion of foam at the mouth.

¹³² Lomazzo, *Trattato* III.1, 164–65.

¹³³ Quoted in Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 2, 361, n. 4.

¹³⁴ Struever, *Language of History*, 61, 74 et passim, reads such illusion as a quality sought by eloquence and historical narrative, essential to a historical psychology. On Humanism

The association of colour with the illusionist character of painting and its affective nature also signals abandonment of speculative study of colour, at least in treatise literature. Mario Equicola signals the theoretic approaches to colour, which he says he will not discuss: whether it is a quality, if its light is substantial or accidental, whether shadows are privations and how colour in the surfaces of bodies moves the soul.¹³⁵ The lack of development of theoretical reflection on colour from the speculations of Medieval optics (*perspectiva*) can be seen as a casualty of the mathematisation of perspective as it is turned into a schema for “legitimate construction”. As the optical speculations of *perspectiva* fade from the treatise literature, colour is limited to rhetorical analogies, to an accidental status, accessory and subsidiary to the teleology of form, to symbolic code (as in theological allegory, lapidary lore and heraldry) or to traditional physico-medical alignments of colour with elements, physical properties and temperament.¹³⁶ The allusions to colour discords and concords in Vasari are metaphors.¹³⁷

Alberti in *De pictura* treats colour in terms of tone; black and white are not independent colours but mix with colour to provide a range of “species” within

as recovering antiquity from death or Hades, see Ciriaco of Ancona's epigram, “O magnam vim artis nostrae ac penitus divinam! / Siquidem dum vivimus quae diu vivis viva, et praeclara fuere, / et longi temporis labe, longaue semivivum injuria / obstrusa penitus, et defuncta jacebant, ex ea demum arte diva / iterum vivos inter homines in lucem ab orco revocata/vivent felicissima temporis reparatione”: “O great and utterly divine power of our art! For in our very lifetime, the noble things that long lived amongst the living, lay dead and wholly buried by the long ruin of time and long injuries of men half-alive—these same things, brought back to the light from Hades by divine art, live most happily again amongst the living by restoration of time”, in Mehus, *Kyriaci Anconitani Itinerarium* 54–55, quoted in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 306, n. 50.

135 Mario Equicola, *Il libro di natura d'amore* (s. l. 1526), 162r–165r, excerpted SAC II, 2153. See G. Olmi, “Osservazione della natura e raffigurazione in Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605)”, *Annali di Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico di Trento*, 3 (1977), 105–80, 116, on Aldrovandi, who calls colour an “inseparable accident of substance”.

136 For a summary of symbolic codings, see Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 79–91. On physico-medical colour iconography, pertaining to planets, metals, seasons, qualities and humours, see Lomazzo, *Trattato* III; VI.6–9 and following treatises excerpted in SAC II, 2305–2323: Coronato Occolti, *Trattato de' colori* (Parma, 1568); Equicola, *Il libro di natura d'amore*; Fulvio Morato, *Del significato de colori* (Venice: s. n., 1535); Giovanni de'Rinaldi, *Il Mostruosissimo mostro* (Venice: Francesco de' Zuliani and Giovanni Cerutto, 1592). See also the discussion devoted to coloured habits (e.g. *livree*) in Luca Contile's *Ragionamento*.

137 Vasari, *Vite* I, Chapter 4. Scientific study of colour harmony would not appear until Newton; see Kemp, *Science of Art*.

the colour.¹³⁸ This confers the status of grey on all colours, as the key to tonal coherence; Gage mentions the central Italian practice of drawing in white and silverpoint on a coloured ground, so that the image is conceived in terms of tonal relations.¹³⁹ Gage associates Alberti's rejection of gold within paintings due to its dazzling effects (*De pictura* II.49) with his promotion of perspective.¹⁴⁰ As we saw, Byzantine *ekphraseis* provides powerful descriptions of the effect of lustre or brilliance on the movement of vision.¹⁴¹ Hills noted how the luminous gold grounds in medieval religious painting showed the action of light as object of vision (God as *lux*, diffused as *lumen*) and universal agent.¹⁴² He associates the gold grounds which show light as medium and object with the studies of the "perspectivists" such as Bacon, Witelo and Pecham; tooling, punching, relief (*pastiglia*) or encrustation with gems further enhanced the optical effects of the surface and persisted until the late Quattrocento.¹⁴³ Vesely sees the interest in the transmission of light in Cusanus and Ghiberti's *Commentaries* as evidence of the philosophical centrality of *perspectiva* as "representation of the ontological structure of reality".¹⁴⁴ Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* with their effulgent material, use of linear perspective and spatial distance represented through light, shadow and movement of bodies, show for Vesely "a coherent alternative view of the structure of perspectival space that may be described as situational".¹⁴⁵

138 Alberti, *De pictura* I.9–10; II.46–47. Discussed in Kemp, *Science of Art*, 266.

139 Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 119; 132; he notes the practice is documented from the fourteenth century.

140 See Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 58; *Colour and Meaning*, 87, on the raking of angles in Byzantine wall mosaics to give variation in the angles of reflection.

141 See Chapter 3 on Photius' *Tenth Homily* where everything in church seems in ecstatic motion, as the spectator "whirls in all directions", sees "variegated spectacle", and imagines his condition transferred to the object.

142 Paul Hills, *The Light in Early Italian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 4.

143 Ibid., 64–71; Hills notes that Pecham discusses the movement of the eye over objects in time as opposed to the fixity of the centric ray postulated by Alberti. See Hall, *Colour and Meaning*, 23–27, on Trecento and Quattrocento surface ornament; she sees the height reached with Gentile da Fabriano's 1425 *Adoration of the Magi* but views it as returning in the last decades of the Quattrocento in the Madonnas of Ghirlandaio, Filippino Lippi and Botticelli.

144 Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2004), 162. Ghiberti's "third commentary" is an amalgam of Roger Bacon's *Perspectiva*, Alhazen's *De aspectibus* and Pecham's *Perspectiva communis*; see Ghiberti, *I commentarii*, ed. Lorenzo Bartoli (Florence: Giunti, 1998).

145 Vesely, *Architecture*, 163–64.

For Gage and Hills, the perspectival model described by Alberti represents the abandonment of a pictorial mode engaged richly with light as agent and object and a diminishing of the visual activity of the viewer, now fixed and static in a predetermined relation to the artwork. For Hills, Alberti's fixing of an intersection of the visual pyramid as the picture plane puts an end to the movement of surface light whose lustre identifies the movement of vision with what is represented: the emanation of the spiritual which illuminates the beholder.¹⁴⁶ Light and colour were symbolic and physical phenomena which required scientific study and provided evidence of the operation—and continuity—of the transcendent in creation.

In the optical discussions of *perspectiva*, colour plays an important role in the study of the medium through which light travels and the *species* or similitudes it creates of itself. In legitimate construction, where recession is established in accordance with a fixed viewing point, colour will concern tone, as Alberti suggests, which shows bodies as volumes revealed in light in a certain situation. Alberti's distinction between a perspectival 'history' and a frame which is golden or jewelled thus implies two levels of visual engagement.¹⁴⁷ The modulated colouring within a predefined perspectival scene keeps the eyes there, proffering a complete image; the gold of framing decorations sends the eye travelling around the whole visual context, so that the totality is apprehended as the entire representational field.¹⁴⁸ What had been a total experience of atmosphere, involving bodily movement in a process of spiritual vision, is displaced to the frame. The frame is subsidiary, since the ordering is contained as principle of construction within the perspectival image itself.

Alberti's distinction between the perspectival *istoria* with its fixed viewing point and tonal colouring and the frame, whence the optical effects of gems and gold are displaced, was less clear cut in practice. Architecture in paintings was both an ornamental frame and an object for demonstrations

146 Hills, *Light*, 18, quotes the Proper Preface of the Mass from Christmas to Epiphany where the Incarnation gives a new brightness to the eyes of the mind, and God's visible form leads us to love of things invisible. Hills calls Alberti "father of the misguided branch of museology which seeks to standardise and regulate the illumination of works of art so that their appearance is unchanging for every viewer".

147 Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 119. See Hall, *Colour and Meaning*, 69, on van Eyck's *Virgin of the Canon van der Paele* (1436, Bruges, Groeninge Museum): "a flickering light . . . makes the surface dance with reflections, moving as the observer moves".

148 Vasari scorns the use of gilded relief (*pastiglia*) in the histories of Pinturicchio's Borgia Apartments as inept, but the praises the lavish gilded decorations produced by Piero di Cosimo or Pontorno in civic 'triumphs' in his *Lives* of those artists, featuring *apparati* which moved through a topography.

of perspectival construction; in each case the architecture situates. Giovanni Bellini's altarpieces display the complex interrelations between ornamental and perspectival framing. Bellini juxtaposes the optical effects of Byzantine ornament (mosaic, gilding, coloured and striated marble) with perspectival motifs such as coffered vaulting (*San Giobbe Altarpiece*) and repeatedly works with the illusions of continuity and completeness created by the perspectival 'window'—always articulated by the frame. In the *Pesaro Altarpiece* Christ's inlaid marble throne has an aperture framing a landscape vista which appears like a *mise en abyme* painting. The apse within the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* is extended into the space of the church through the frame; it also contrasts the dull or harsh reflected light of the gold on brocade, mosaic and capitals with soft glow of natural light on cloth and the airy landscape glimpsed beyond the apse. In the *Saint Christopher Altarpiece* at St John Chrysostom, the frame is attenuated into the underside of an arch with a Greek inscription, bringing the sacred perspectival scene as close as possible to the viewer.¹⁴⁹

Hills says that Bellini's "coloured space affirms the privilege of revelation", showing the greatest refinement in Renaissance painting "whereby thought becomes incarnate in design: in doing so, space becomes luminous, self-evident, revelatory".¹⁵⁰ In Bellini, the representation of the phenomenal world by means of *perspectiva* provides continuity with the transcendent, but this continuity is articulated by the framing arch. Bellini can be seen in continuity the artistic practitioners of *perspectiva*, such as Ghiberti, whom Vesely describes as "grasping the phenomenal level of perspective prior to its mathematisation and articulating a transcendental nature of vision on the level of directly observable phenomena".¹⁵¹ Bellini's demonstration of the versatile nature of the perspectival-ornamental arch also suggests its potentially playful deployment for shows of artifice and scenographic virtuosity, which we shall examine shortly.

As the ontological representation of light that creates space and emanates from bodies turns to a geometric formula for "legitimate construction", what unifies the image and ornament is not the ontology of light but the apprehension of forms, hence the primacy of *disegno*. The next section will pursue the

149 The inscription of the *St Christopher* altarpiece quotes the Septuagint version of Psalm 14.2, in reference to the use of the church by Greek-speaking Venetians. For the apse opened to become a loggia, see also Bartolomeo Montana, *St Bartholomew Altarpiece* (1485, Vicenza, Museo Civico) or a pergola, also Cimo da Conegliano, *Madonna della Pergola* (1489, Vicenza, Museo Civico).

150 Hills, *Venetian Colour*, 171.

151 Vesely, *Architecture*, 160, on Ghiberti's *Commentaries*.



FIGURE 7.2 Thomas Struth, *San Zaccaria, Venice* 1995, showing Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna with Saints Peter and Jerome*, 1505.

© THOMAS STRUTH.

progression from *perspectiva* to perspective as a ready-made tool and its decorative application.

Perspectiva and Perspective

We have seen that the deeper stratum of reflection pertaining to colour belongs to the study of light and vision—the Greek *optica*, and Medieval *perspectiva*.¹⁵² *Perspectiva* is seen as arising from Grosseteste's 'light metaphysics', where the Platonic and Christian Platonic metaphor of light as analogy for knowledge and for the emanation of the divine becomes the subject of cosmogonic theories and physical investigation; Ghiberti's optics in the *Commentaries* has been

¹⁵² On the use of term *perspectiva* by Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, Witelo, Pecham, Biagio Pelcani and other philosophers writing on optics, see Graziella Federici Vescovini, 'A New Origin of Perspective', *RES* 38 (Autumn 2000), 73–81. On ontological discussions of light see De Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale* III, 3–29, 243–51, on the psychology of vision in Bacon and Witelo.

viewed in this Platonic tradition.¹⁵³ From Grosseteste's claim for light as the intelligible form of corporeality, the "perspectivists" such as Bacon, Pecham and Witelo built physical theories aided by the optics of Ptolemy, Al-Kindi and Alhazen.¹⁵⁴ Witelo in the prefatory letter of *Perspectiva libri x*, addressed to William of Moerbeke, discusses the emanation of divine being, life, light and intelligence, naming perceptible light as the mediator of superior bodies. Light imprints the form of "the divine and intelligible artificers" upon perishable bodies; it possesses the actuality of corporeal form and is the first of all sensible forms.¹⁵⁵

In *De luce* Grosseteste posits light as the "first form created in the first matter", which

multiplied itself . . . an infinite number of times on all sides and spread itself out uniformly in every direction . . . drawing [matter] out along with itself to a mass the size of a material universe.¹⁵⁶

153 The term "light metaphysics" was coined by Clemens Baeumker, *Witelo, ein Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1908). For disagreement with the term, see David Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 95, who replaces it with "philosophy of light". On Grosseteste, see James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Ludwig Baur, *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1917); A.C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 1100–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953); Richard Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). Gage, *Colour and Meaning*, 98–104, links Ghiberti to the Platonism of Niccolò Niccoli and Ambrogio Traversari, who translated pseudo-Dionysius in the 1430s.

154 For a lucid summary, see Federici Vescovini, "A New Origin"; on the metaphysical content of *perspectiva*, see Vesely, *Architecture*, 110–73. Bacon's *Perspectiva* discusses the relation of optics to religion at III.3.1–2 in terms of analogies: the seven things required for the preservation of the eye correspond to the seven virtues, eight things required for spiritual vision correspond to eight things required for physical vision, etc. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 100, argues that the philosophical character of optics is taken for granted after Bacon and Pecham and Witelo pursue optics for its own sake. Lindberg's view concerns the practitioners of *perspectiva*; it does not cover the use made of their work in non-optical contexts, such as Dante. On this, see Simon Gilson, *Medieval Optics and Theories of Light in the Works of Dante* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000). On the application of the thinking of the "perspectivists" to pre-Albertian painting, see Hills, *Light*.

155 Unpublished translation of J.S. Wilkie (c. 1977), photocopy of typescript held in Warburg Institute Library, 2–3, 5.

156 Grosseteste, *De luce*, trans. C.C. Riedl (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1978), 10, quoted in Vesely, *Architecture*, 113–14.

Grosseteste's light metaphysics develops the Platonic and Augustinian use of light as privileged analogy for our participation in the intelligible or for the structure of emanation which creates the universe in Plotinus; he called it the beauty and *ornatus* of all created things.¹⁵⁷ Grosseteste's view of light as extending matter with itself meant that light resided in things, as well as proceeding from a transcendent, invisible source.¹⁵⁸ Grosseteste here also follows Augustine's perception in *De trinitate* 11.7–11 that matter becomes dimensional as light multiplies itself from a single point and forms a finite sphere, the *sphaera lucis* or firmament.¹⁵⁹ As Vesely notes, Grosseteste was probably the first thinker to assert the continuity between celestial and terrestrial realities on the basis of the presence of common matter.¹⁶⁰ This continuity is asserted also by Bonaventure:

lux est natura communis reperta in omnibus corporibus tam coelestibus quam terrestribus; lux est pulcherrimum et delectabilissimum et optimum inter corporalia.¹⁶¹

Such continuity provided a scientific basis to study the luminous qualities of materials, which had already played such a strong symbolic role in Medieval art. The thirteenth century *Liber de intelligentiis*, ascribed to Witelo, exemplifies

157 "lux igitur est pulchritudo et ornatus omnis creaturae", Grosseteste, *Hexaemeron*, quoted in Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 189 and De Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale* 111, 124, who notes that Grosseteste resolves the contradiction between beauty as light and beauty as proportion by arguing that whatever accords with itself is most beautiful (*ibid.*, 134). Cf. Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d'amore* (Bari: Laterza, 2008), 332, on the contrast between sunlight striking diaphanous and opaque bodies to illustrate the distinction between understanding of divine wisdom in angelic and human intellects and in all the other created bodies.

158 Lindberg distinguishes between various levels of discussion of light in the works of Grosseteste and Roger Bacon: epistemological (sight is like intellection); cosmogonic, derived from Plotinus' emanationist metaphysics; physical, and metaphoric, in which he includes John 1:4–9 and pseudo-Dionysius. He speaks of Bacon as "descending from the sublime metaphors of pseudo-Dionysius to pure banality" (*Theories of Vision*, 99).

159 Vesely, *Architecture*, 122.

160 *Ibid.*

161 *Commentaria in sententiarum* 11, dist. 12. art. 2. quaest.1.4 "light is the common nature discerned in all bodies, heavenly and earthly. Light is the most beautiful and most delightful and best of corporeal things". Bonaventure discusses light as the common form which informs matter, the corporeal or spiritual nature of light, and its character as substantial or accidental form in *Commentaria in sententiarum* 11, dist. 13. See also *Itinerarium mentis in Deo* 2.7 on the light which is generated from Eternal Light.

this ontological approach to material ornament.¹⁶² Gage sees the apophatic symbolism and theophany of pseudo-Dionysius and Eriugena as underlying the great stained glass of the French cathedrals, starting with Abbot Suger and his ecstatic “anagogic” contemplation of his decorations in Saint Denis.¹⁶³

If light is first substance, it becomes measurable, or rather measure is possible because of light. Grosseteste posited the propagation of light as the paradigm for the “multiplication of species”, produced when an agent multiplies its power from itself to its recipient.¹⁶⁴ The geometry of lines and angles made by light appear in other natural effects, making the study of light exemplary for the study of nature.¹⁶⁵ This approach informs Roger Bacon’s *De multiplicatione specierum* (c. 1262) in which the propagation of likenesses to recipients in light is a model for behaviour of other natural agents.¹⁶⁶ The geometric regularity of light also underpinned the association of reason and sight.¹⁶⁷

The use of ornament to describe the wholeness and beauty of the world, rendered to us through sight, as evoked in Ficino’s *Symposium* commentary has an optical counterpart in the light metaphysics of *perspectiva* with its demonstration of the intelligibility of the world, as made and made tangible by light, and the rationality of our apprehension of it.¹⁶⁸ *Splendor*, the lustre of effulgent surfaces which produced multiple reflections, plays a major role in Platonic accounts of emanation and their rhetoric rehearsal in passages such as Bembo’s love oration in Castiglione, with its evocation of a golden jewelled

162 See the essays of Patrik Reuterswärd, “The Significance of Gold in Funeral Art”, in *The Visible and Invisible in Art*, (Vienna: Irsa, 1991), 9–11; “Windows of Divine Light”, in *ibid.*, 45–56, where the doubts over Witelo’s authorship are noted. On *De intelligentiis* see De Bruyne, *Etudes d’esthétique médiévale* III, 239–43, who notes the attribution to Adam de Belladonna.

163 Gage, *Colour and Culture*, 69–78. Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 190, quotes Durandus in *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* (1459) on windows which “transmit the light of the sun, that is God, into the heart of the faithful”.

164 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 98.

165 See *ibid.*, on Grosseteste’s geometric analysis in *De lineis, angulis et figuris*.

166 See Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspectiva in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), xxiii.

167 Summers, *Judgment of Sense*, 173, on Nicolas Oresme. Alhazen likened the knowledge (*cognitio*) derived from the comparison of sensation, and of sensation to memory, to reasoning by syllogism; see *ibid.*, 54–55.

168 Ambrogio Traversari’s translations of pseudo-Dionysius appeared in 1436. I concur with Vesely, *Architecture*, 130 ff., that the optical investigations of Bacon, Peckham, Witelo and Biagio Pelacani cannot be divorced from ontology. In this physical-ontological tradition, see Ficino’s *De lumine, Opera Omnia* (Basel: Henricopetrus, 1576), I, 976–86.

vase struck by light.¹⁶⁹ This is not to overlook that the basic tenet of optics—that light can be measured—sits uneasily with the notion of ornament as a kind of superfluity. All the conceptions of ornament we have viewed concern quality, or better a way of viewing things in qualitative, relational terms. The metaphoric ‘light’ of ornament and the light measured by *perspectiva* entail diverse forms of reasoning, but share an ultimate belief in light as the emanation of the divine which manifests the world in its beauty, intelligibility and wholeness.

Federici Vescovini describes the decline in the metaphysical character of *perspectiva*, and its grouping with the quadrivium in the fourteenth century.¹⁷⁰ She regards the growing importance of physics in *perspectiva* as confirmed by the work of Biagio Pelacani, which she describes as breaking with Platonic and Aristotelian traditions in favour of an empirical approach derived from Alhazen.¹⁷¹ Biagio’s work concerned the measurement of visual quantities in relation to the eye, and was known through Paolo Toscanelli to Brunelleschi, who apparently first demonstrated the application of *perspectiva* to pictorial projection. Ghiberti’s *Third Commentary* with its discussion of *perspectiva*, of Alhazen and the psychology of vision, forms the bridge between the perspectivists and the application of their theories to developing artistic practice. Lindberg comments that Alberti’s model used a simple version of the geometry of vision but not its physics or physiology.¹⁷²

As optics concerns both the action of light and the physiology and psychology of vision, it concerns both the real and the illusory. Light or *lumen* as the medium of sight and emanation of *lux* is regular and rational in its operation. Vision however concerned the fallacies of sight, the misleading impressions created by the “inner senses” which distort the reality of what we see, hence the links with fantasy and the ‘sophistic’ character of scenographic representation. The qualities of depth and distance depicted by perspective are also qualities linked with the *sensus communis*, which co-ordinated the information from various sensory organs so that our impressions of ‘reality’ were not confused, but coherent and organised. Perspective in short could be seen as a tool providing harmonious representations of our sensory impressions that reflected

169 On *splendor*, see Hills, *Light*, 11–12.

170 Federici Vescovini, “A New Origin”, 76. See also Pollaiuolo’s Tomb of Sixtus IV, where *Prospectiva* appears alongside Music and Geometry in the personifications of the arts. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, concurs on the progressive interest in optics in its own right.

171 Federici Vescovini, “A New Origin”, 78–81.

172 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 149, 154.

the hegemonic role of vision in the *sensus communis*.¹⁷³ This is depicted in the diagram in Cesariano, *De architectura* 11v, which shows the interaction of the pyramid of vision from the eye and the radiant action of light from the sun through the universe. Summers notes the reference to the *sensus communis* in the diagram, as the optic vein from which the senses—particularly sight—radiate.¹⁷⁴ The image thus shows how the *sensus communis*, linked with the fallacies of sight that entail optical correction, relates to the geometric, rational character of vision as it apprehends the action of light. Summers comments:

The universe . . . is an optical universe, a universe made up of light, which is geometrically regular, in intersection with sight, which is also geometrically regular.¹⁷⁵

Cesariano's preoccupation with the rationality of sight is also announced from the decorated capital of *De architectura* 1r, glossing Vitruvius' invocation of Augustus as 'mens divina'. The image shows the sun sending its rays onto a book of geometric figures, an astrolabe and measuring instruments, one of which is held by the scholar who writes. Cesariano comments on man's essential nature awakening as he sees himself in the light of day, and by reasoning (*excogitare*) recalling his longing to ascend to his divine origin.¹⁷⁶ He calls the mind the "eye of the soul" and affirms the quadrivial status of *perspectiva* while noting its use in creating artistic illusions.¹⁷⁷ Cesariano in short shows the range and applications of *perspectiva*, from its source in divine illumination of mind and eye to instrument of pictorial illusion.¹⁷⁸

173 See Summers, *Judgment*, Chapter 8, "Optics and the common sense".

174 Ibid., 178–81. The diagram is illustrated in Vesely, *Architecture*, 133.

175 Summers, *Judgment*, 180.

176 "Quando poi ela [umana essentia] si vede producta a la luce diurna como admirativa, pur a poco a poco per lo excogitare reasume per naturale memoria ancora voler ascendere ale alte cose del suo divino principio" Cesariano, *De architectura*, 1r.

177 Ibid., 3v, glossing Vitruvius' *scientia optica*. Glossing "erudito in geometria" Cesariano writes "tute le cose del mundo universalmente e generalmente sono affigurate e comprehendente superficialmente e corporalmente" (ibid.).

178 See ibid., 4v, glossing "optica" on lighting, with comment on Bramante's work at Santa Maria presso San Satiro. Francis Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 57–58, quotes a 1447 passage from Michele Savonarola which commends painting as it is a part of perspective, a part of philosophy concerned with projection of rays.

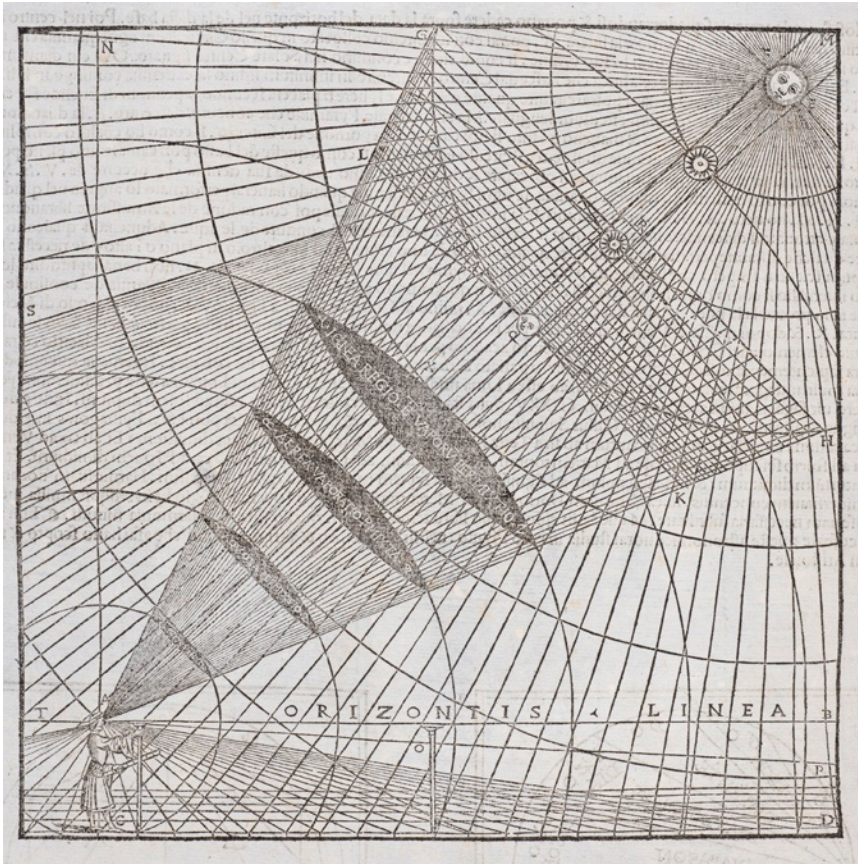


FIGURE 7.3 Cesariano, *De architectura*, 1521, 11v. Warburg Institute Library, London.

This raises the question of the distinction between the complexity of *perspectiva* and the schematic character of Alberti's rules for pictorial perspective in *De pictura*, prefaced by his statement that the theories of vision are difficult and useless to the invention of linear perspective.¹⁷⁹ The source of Alberti's perspectival schema and his engagement with visual theory has been much discussed, from Lindberg's avowal of his knowledge of Alhazen and Bacon, Edgerton's suggestion of his use of Euclid to Kemp's denial that Alberti's

¹⁷⁹ *De pictura* 1.5, "Quae disceptatio sane difficilis atque apud nos admodum inutilis pretereatur". The sentence does not appear in *Della pittura*.



FIGURE 7.4 Cesariano, *De architectura*, 1r. Warburg Institute Library, London.

pictorial formula and *perspectiva* much concerned each other.¹⁸⁰ A further aspect to the development of perspective as pictorial instrument comes with the editorial work and commentary on Vitruvius, where *scaenographia* is a type of architectural projection and the art of stage design.

Even these brief comments show the varied understanding of perspective amongst scholars and the range of potential applications in the fifteenth century. It was tied through the study of light to Platonic Realism and—as an application of optics—to the fallacies of sight.¹⁸¹ It could be a means for

180 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 152; Samuel Edgerton, “Alberti’s Perspective: A New Discovery and a New Evaluation”, *Art Bulletin* 48, 3–4 (1966), 373; Kemp, *Science*, 26. Vesely, *Architecture*, 411, n. 67, sees Alberti’s perspectival thought as derived from Pecham’s *Perspectiva communis*, based on Bacon’s work. Cf. Vesely, *Architecture*, 132, on geometric representation as situated in an ontological structure of the world.

181 Roger Bacon in *Perspectiva* III.3.3–4 discusses the wonders and ‘apparitions’ which can be created using mirrors and refraction. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 120, notes that

showing the emanation of *lumen* as analogy for procession of the divine and as paradigm for the behaviour of corporeal things; it was also to be a tool for producing illusion and an element of theatre. The two come together in the decoration of church cupolas with apotheoses involving virtuoso foreshortenings, of which Correggio was the masterly exponent; the *dolce inganno* of scenography depicts the action of transcendent light.

Thus one should look at both the level at which perspective works ('light metaphysics', geometry, painter's instrument) and what is used to represent.¹⁸² Like Alberti, Serlio in the *Secondo libro* (1545) refuses to discuss the philosophical foundations of linear perspective, treating it as a formula to get a predetermined result and identifying it with scenography. Vasari comments that artists taught one another perspective, dismisses technical discussion of perspectival construction as difficult and tedious, and criticises Ghiberti's discussion of optics.¹⁸³ His response to Varchi's *paragone* debates discussed perspective as offering delight to the eyes, alongside the depiction of fleeting appearances; in Varchi's second *Maggioranza delle arti* discussion, the deceiving nature of vision is exemplified by painting as a 'sophistic' art of appearances.¹⁸⁴ Zuccari groups perspective with other manifestations of *disegno esterno fantastico*, including machines and *capricci*.¹⁸⁵ He dismisses the notion that painting descends from mathematical, specifically geometrical expertise, insisting that painting imitates nature—and repeating the formulation that the more false art is, the 'truer' it is to its nature, with Proteus, ancient image for sophistry, celebrated as a figure for art.¹⁸⁶ Kemp attributes the lack of treatises on perspective in Italy to its status as a technique, and notes that when treatises do appear in the later Cinquecento, they reflect mathematical

Pecham's *Perspectiva communis* went through ten editions between 1482–1593, including an Italian translation.

182 See Daniele Barbaro, *I dieci libri* (Venice: Franceschi, 1567), 14, who notes the distinction between *prospettiva* in its proper sense as optics and its common use to indicate the practice of optical correction or the legitimate construction used in scenography.

183 See Vasari, *Vite* I, 120–124; he criticised Ghiberti's *Commentaries* for giving too little space to artistic biography and for plagiarism; see Ghiberti, *I commentarii*, 11.

184 Varchi, *Maggioranza delle arti*, 41–42, 61 (Vasari's response).

185 Zuccaro, *L'idea* II.4.

186 See *ibid.*, 101, 103, on mathematics, geometry and criticism of the 'futile' scientific researches of Dürer and Leonardo; *ibid.*, 95, 98 on art's *finzione* and Proteus. Zuccari opens his discussion of architecture with the Stoic topos about the world adorned first by nature and then by human artifice in building (*ibid.*, 117).

interest in three-dimensional geometry, and the flowering of scholarship on Euclid, Ptolemy and Archimedes.¹⁸⁷

The influence of *literati* on discussions of art and the consequent privileging of “sister arts” themes, such as style and invention, whose philosophical deepening led into questions of form and concept, would seem to contribute to the fading of discussion of the ontological character underlying perspective.¹⁸⁸ If perspective is treated as a pre-ordered schema into which a content is collaged without further understanding, what status does this confer on the imported content? The way that the creation of a simplified, applied model turns the larger speculative thought into an implicit principle, ‘contained’ in the subject, prepares for the rise of the treatise literature at the end of the sixteenth century (Lomazzo, Scamozzi) where the arts are constituted by “theory” and “practice”.

Perspective, Theatre and Framing

This returns us to theatrical character of perspective as the instrument of scenographic projection. The theatrical associations of perspective go back to the beginnings of tragedy in Athens, with the appearance of the scenographic sets designed by Agatharcus for the tragedies of Aeschylus or Sophocles.¹⁸⁹ Scenic decorations which depict a setting in a naturalistic manner, according to the fallacies of sight—Plato’s *mimesis phantastikē*—thus accompany the evolution of dialogue in drama, as one, then two and three speakers develop from the chorus. Dialogue between actors requires a more specific setting than a chorus which performs sacred hymns or dances. With the variety of human actions comes the need for decorum, so that the right thing appears in the right way and place.

Unlike the Stoic *phantasia kataleptikē* which grasps appearances that form the basis of knowledge, the fantastic mimesis of theatre sets creates deceptive

187 Kemp, *Science* 69, 76. Amongst such mathematical works on perspective are Daniele Barbaro’s *La Practica della prospettiva* (1569); Commandino’s commentary to Ptolemy’s *Planisphaerum* (1558); Egnazio Danti, commentary to Vignola, *Le due regole* (1583).

188 See Roskill, *Dolce’s Aretino*, 98, where Dolce presents the *ragionamento* on the merits of painters as useful for writers, given the “conformity” between painting and literature.

189 Vitruvius, *De architectura* VII, preface 11, states that Agatharcus, credited with writing a lost treatise on scene painting, painted the *scaena* for the *Oresteia*. According to Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a, scene painting was introduced with the tragedies of Sophocles, not Aeschylus. Vitruvius discusses *scaenographia* as the third kind of architectural projection at 1.2.2 and stage design at v.6.8.

illusions which provide a setting for the fables of the poets.¹⁹⁰ It varies even from the optical correction endorsed by Vitruvius, Alberti and Daniele Barbaro in discussion of *eurythmia* which adjusts proportions according to the fallacies of sight so that buildings appear proportionate and 'rational'.¹⁹¹ Rather than working to correct the fallacies of sight, scenography presents images of unreal things, so that the rationality of the method of construction must be considered alongside the fantastic nature of the representation created.¹⁹²

The theatric effect conferred by perspective as it presents depictions correlated within a field has often been noted, as in the discussions of the so-called "Ideal City" panels in Urbino, Baltimore and Berlin.¹⁹³ These panels with their detailed, controlled architectural depictions of deserted piazzas show an intriguing combination of completeness and emptiness in their lack of human content. They depict the totalizing effect of perspective, conveyed by the regular solids of the buildings in tension with the role of buildings as settings for human activities and fulfilled by them. Perspective provides a means of depicting settings that has a compelling coherence and whose apparent naturalism co-exists with its abstract and generalised character, free from any need for descriptive content.¹⁹⁴ The scenographic field however needs content to fulfil its theatrical character; thus perspectival paintings of uninhabited urban spaces strike us with their 'unreal' quality, frequently likened to empty stage sets.¹⁹⁵

190 For the *phantasia kataleptikē* and the Stoic claim that there is a true fantasy which represents objects accurately and provides a criterion for knowledge, see Diogenes Laertius VII.50; Cicero, *Academica* II.7.2; Summers, *Judgment*, 46–7.

191 Vitruvius, III.3.11–13 (on entasis), III.v.9 (on distance and angle of vision), VI.ii.1–4 (on the fallacies of sight); Alberti, *De pictura* I.5ff; Daniele Barbaro, *Dieci libri* 33, 165, 282, on *eurythmia* as a tempering of proportion to achieve beauty; Summers, *Judgment*, 48–9.

192 On the rationality of perspectival construction, see Kemp, *Science*, Chapter 1, who opens his account with Brunelleschi's 'invention' of legitimate construction.

193 On the scenic effect of perspective as its "primary characteristic", see Hubert Damisch, *The Origins of Perspective*, trans John Goodman (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995), 226 et passim.

194 Vesely, *Architecture*, 168, writes: "We have reached the threshold of a new era in which representation will be able to emancipate itself from the given conditions of meaning, establishing its own horizon of reference in the internal logic and visual coherence of the individual elements". He speaks of "a new relationship in which concept or conceptual image anticipates experience".

195 See Damisch, *Origins*, 199–264, on the extensive debate about the status, purposes and interpretations of the "Ideal City" panels, notably Krautheimer's contested attempts in "The Tragic and Comic Scenes of the Italian Renaissance. The Baltimore and Urbino Panels", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 33 (1948), 327–48, to relate the Urbino and Baltimore



FIGURE 7.5 Detail of “Ideal city” panel, ascribed to Fra Carnevale, c. 1480–84. Walters Museum, Baltimore, acquired by Henry Walters with the Massarenti Collection, 1902.
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Vitruvius’ comments on *scaenographia* in *De architectura* 1.2 as a mode of architectural projection suggest representation of single buildings, rather than a whole field in which things are situated. Pirro Ligorio’s 1561 map of ancient Rome, the *Antequae urbis imago*, applies this mode of representation to the entire city, shown a dense aggregation of edifices, each rendered singly in oblique recession as though copied from ancient coins and reliefs.¹⁹⁶ The lack of co-ordination between multiple viewpoints gives a chaotic appearance but also enhances awareness of the competing claims of buildings or complexes within a topography.

Wohl has suggested that perspective was applied to specific loci within paintings such as Fra Angelico’s *Coronation of the Virgin*, rather than forming an overall system which regulated everything within the image.¹⁹⁷ He also notes that Vasari refers to architectural features and even perspectives as ornaments, as we saw.¹⁹⁸ Wohl’s view is part of an argument which plays down the

panels to the comic and tragic scenes, which led him to suggest that the rotunda at the centre of the Urbino panel was a *macellum*.

196 See Howard Burns, “Pirro Ligorio’s reconstruction of ancient Rome: the *Antiquae urbis imago* of 1561”, in *Pirro Ligorio. Artist and antiquarian*, ed. Robert Gaston (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 1998), 19–92; Ian Campbell, “Pirro Ligorio and the temples of Rome on coins”, in *ibid.*, 93–120.

197 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 97–8, argues that there are two perspective systems for the foreground pavement and the throne, tabernacle and steps.

198 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 91. Wohl notes that settings were often filled in as part of his argument against the conception of perspective paintings as geometric grids in which elements were placed. Pino, *Dialogo*, 115, refers to perspectives as part of the adorning of painting. See Chapter 10 for listing of perspectives listed in catalogues of ornamental prints.

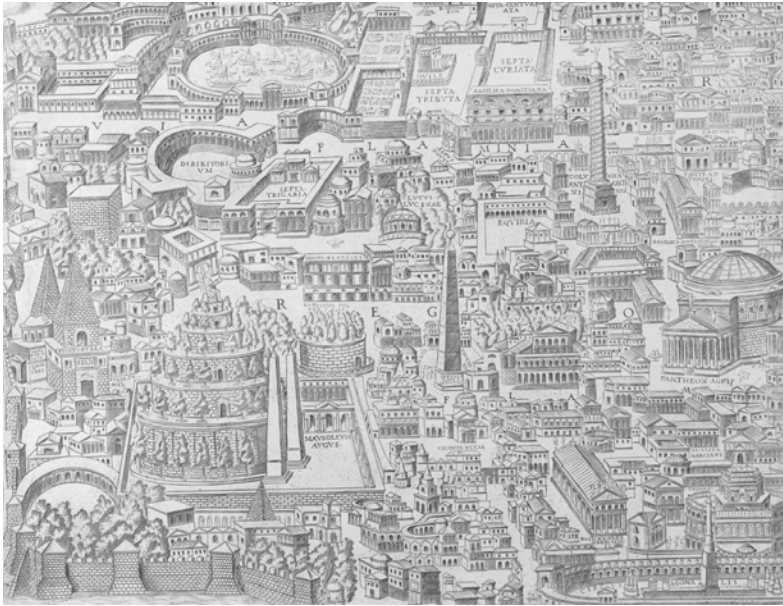


FIGURE 7.6 *Pirro Ligorio, detail of Antiquae imago urbis, 1561.*

PHOTO: THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME LIBRARY.

role of perspective in favour of a conception of paintings as decorated surfaces; this however ignores the role of perspective in foreshortenings, and thus in the dramatic coherence of an image as well as the deeper significance of *perspectiva*.

The unified, coherent setting provided by perspective provides an ideal setting or container for figural design, with its pathetic and performative character, its liveliness and decorum, and accentuates its artificiality by its pre-ordered character. This scenic character can give quasi-dramatic coherence to aggregated visual arguments, as typified by the Stanza della Segnatura, which Gombrich saw as the pictorial equivalent of prolusions to university lecture courses, where the praises of a subject and its exemplary authors, were set out.¹⁹⁹ The tension between allegorical figure in the vault and copious theatre of exemplars on the walls illustrates the relation between the encyclopaedic gathering of examples and the universal concept or form; the painted room

199 Gombrich, "Raphael's *Stanza della Segnatura* and the Nature of its Symbolism", in *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 85–101. Cf. Landino's presentation of his Dante commentary as a pageant of Florentine worthies; the decoration of the Porta al Prato in the 1565 Medici wedding *apparato* recalls both Landino's text and the Stanza.

also ‘extends’ into an axial topography as the vista of the Belvedere opens from the window beneath the *Parnassus*. The Stanza shows great conceptual elegance in handling the conditions of perspectival decoration.

Kemp remarked on perspective as a form of architectural decoration in the works of Raphael and his followers, as seen in the fictive pergolas and opened vaults which permitted shows of foreshortening and illusionist effects, a tendency taken to extremes by Pellegrino Tibaldi.²⁰⁰ A master of decorative and scenic perspective, such as Peruzzi, exploited the playful, experimental space it offered as a means of reflecting on the gathering and recreation of building types in an antiquarian approach to architecture. His “Allegory of Mercury” drawing (Louvre) shows the scenic character of perspective accommodating fanciful re-inventions of ancient buildings and a collaged satiric *istoria*, depicting a mercury enema administered with pipes resembling the canes of Signorelli’s mysterious *Allegory of Pan*, under the guidance of squabbling quacks who mimic Plato and Aristotle in the *School of Athens*.

This decorative handling of perspective appears in Serlio, following Bramante, Raphael and Peruzzi, whose ideas and drawings he inherited and published in his book on the orders, *Libro Quattro* (1537).²⁰¹ Serlio was attentive to the theatrical transformation effected by buildings on their viewers, as he notes that people within the Pantheon appear to gain in stature and beauty due to the lighting of the building—in short, they become idealised like actors in a scene.²⁰² Serlio gives geometry and perspective as the elementary stages of architecture, but identifies perspective with Vitruvius’ *scaenographia* and rejects speculation on its scientific validity as irrelevant to architects:

I will not philosophise or go into arguments about what perspective is, or what it arises from, because the learned Euclid discusses these speculations with subtlety. But coming to the architect’s practice and needs, I will say that perspective is what Vitruvius calls *scaenographia*.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Kemp, *Science of Art*, 70–72.

²⁰¹ Serlio acknowledged his use of Peruzzi’s material in *Libro Quattro*; see C.L. Frommel, “Serlio e la scuola romana”, in *Sebastiano Serlio*, ed. Christof Thoenes (Milan: Electa, 1989), 39–49.

²⁰² Serlio, *Secondo Libro*, 50r. Serlio’s praise of the Pantheon focuses on its illumination. The passage was underlined and glossed by John Webb in the 1619 Serlio he owned with Inigo Jones.

²⁰³ “Nè mi stenderò in filosofare, ò disputare che cosa sia Prospettiva, nè d’onde sia derivate: percioche il profondissimo Euclide ne tratta sottilmente con la speculatione. Ma venendo alla prattica e al bisogno dell’Architetto, dirò bene che Prospettiva è quella cosa, che

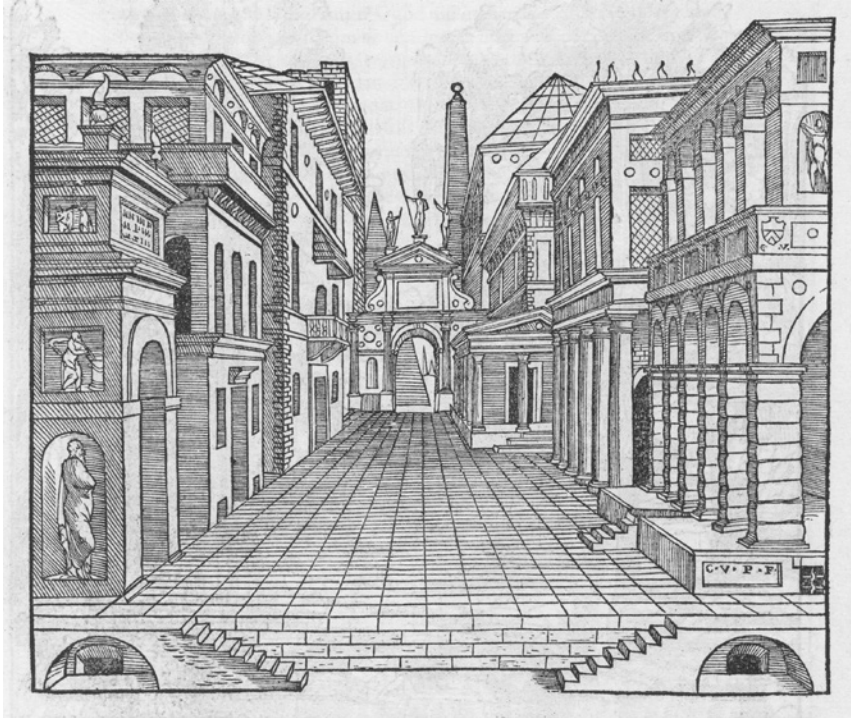


FIGURE 7.7 Serlio, *Tragic scene*, Secondo Libro, 1545. Typ 525.69.781, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

PHOTO: HOUGHTON LIBRARY

Serlio's treatise on the scene, at the culmination of his book on perspective, regards perspective as a self-contained schema for projection of illusions whose relation to vision remains implicit. The realm of artifice which perspective creates through recession, foreshortening and lighting, is described as a fantasy world, where images of superb buildings and antique *memorie* are populated by fabulous and chimeric creatures like *grottesche* who perform *intermedi* and overrun even the tragic scene:

There you can see in a small space, created with the art of perspective, splendid palaces, huge temples, multifarious buildings near and far off, spacious piazzas graced with divers edifices, long, straight streets crossed by other roads, triumphal arches, exceedingly high columns, pyramids, obelisks and thousands of other beautiful things, adorned with infinite

Vitruvio domanda scenografia". Sebastiano Serlio, *Il Secondo Libro di Prospettiva* (1545) in *Tutte l'Opere d'Architettura et Prospettiva* (Venice: Giacomo de'Franceschi), 18r.

lamps . . . so skilfully arranged that they appear to be like many dazzling jewels . . . diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and the like. Here the shining, crescent moon can be seen very slowly rising and be already risen without the eyes of the viewers having ever observed its movement. On some other stages the rising of the sun, its progression and then at the end of the play its setting can be seen, done with such cleverness that many of the viewers are amazed by it. With this artifice, for some particular purpose a god can be seen descending from the heaven, or some planets can be seen flying through the air. Then on stage come the various *intermezzi*, most richly decorated: costumes of various types, with outlandish dress both for the moorish dancers and the musicians.

Sometimes there are strange animals, with men and boys inside, striking poses, leaping and running so well that the viewers are completely amazed. All these things are so satisfying to the eye and heart that it is hard to imagine any man-made material object that is more beautiful.²⁰⁴

The civic, educational role of theatre, which Cesariano linked with its visual conditions, is reduced to the viewing of *meraviglie*. Serlio's account of the satyr scene focuses on yet more wonders, with a glowing description of jewelled grottoes peopled with marine creatures, created by Girolamo Genga for spectacles for the Urbino court.²⁰⁵

204 Translation of Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture* 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 83. Serlio, *Secondo Libro*, 44r: "il discoprirsi lo apparato di una Scena, dove si vede in picciol spatio fatto dall'arte della Prospettiva, superbi palazzo, amplissimi Tempi, diversi casamenti, e da presso, e di lontano, spatiose piazza ornate di varij edificij, drittissime e lunghe strade incrociate da altre vie, archi trionfali, altissime colonne, piramidi, obelischii, e mille altre cose belle, ornate d'infiniti lumi . . . Quivi si vede la cornuta, e lucida Luna levarsi pian piano, e esser inalzata, che gli occhi de gli spettatori non l'han veduta muoversi; in alcune altre si vede il levare del Sole, e il suo girare, e nel finire della Commedia tramontar poi con tale artificio, che molti spettatori di tal cosa stupiscono. Con l'artificio à qualche bon proposito si vederà discender alcun Dio dal Cielo, correre qualche Pianeta per l'aria: venir poi sù la Scena diversi intermedij ricchissimamente ornati, livree di varie sorti con habiti strani, sì per moresche, come per musiche. Talhor si vede strani animali, entro de' quali son huomini, e fanciulli, atteggiando, saltando, e correndo così bene, che non è senza meraviglia de' riguardanti, le quai tutte le cose dan tanto di contentezza all'occhio, e all'animo, che cosa materiale, fatta dall'arte, non si potria imaginare più bella".

205 "sassi copiosi di diverse conche marine, di lumache . . . di tronchi di coralli di più colori, di madre perle, e di granchi marini . . . con tanta diversità di cose belle"; "rocks abundant in varied conches, shells . . . multicoloured stems of coral, mother of pearl, crabs . . . and great variety of beauties", Serlio, *Secondo Libro*, 47v. Like the *intermedi*, the satyr scene

The perspectival framework works by using axioms derived from Euclid, which Serlio refuses to discuss, but it is not envisaged as a continuum of our natural environment. This is particularly evident in Serlio's discussion of lighting; the use of illumination in scenic perspective creates a coherent, but supernatural world of artifice, sparkling with innumerable lights which resemble rubies, diamonds and emeralds.²⁰⁶ Similar descriptions appear in other contemporary or later accounts of staging, such as Vasari's praise of Bastiano da Sangallo for his artificial sunrises and sunsets.²⁰⁷ In Vicenza, where Serlio's scenography was influential, Giacomo Dolfin wrote that Scamozzi's perspectival set in the Teatro Olimpico when illuminated, surpassed nature and the things they represented.²⁰⁸ The metaphysical model of divinely created light which emanates through creation, illuminating all things in their variety to reveal the perfection of the *ornatus mundi* is replaced by the ingenuity of the artist whose light discloses the creations of the imagination.

Scamozzi's Teatro Olimpico sets were designed for a 1585 performance of *Oedipus* in which the relation of set, music, speech and gesture were carefully coordinated into a "universal example" as the director Angelo Ingegneri noted.²⁰⁹

is peopled with "satyrs, nymphs, sirens, various monsters or strange animals, made with such art . . . that they represented these creatures alive" (ibid.).

- 206 "cose belle, ornate d'infiniti lumi, grandi, mezzani, e piccolo, secondo che l'arte lo comporta, li quali sono così artificiosamente ordinati, che rappresentano tante gioie lucidissime, come saria, Diamanti, Rubini, Zafiri, Smeraldi, e cose simili", Serlio, *Secondo Libro*, 44r; cf. ibid., 48r, on light as jewelled colour. Serlio concludes his treatise on the scene with a practical account of stage lighting, at *Secondo Libro* 48r–48v.
- 207 See Vasari's *Life* of Bastiano, *Vite* v, 398; Zorzi, *Teatro e la città*, 98–9, discusses the designs for comic and tragic scenes with which Bastiano annotated his edition of Vitruvius and sees him as the link between Peruzzi's experiments and Serlio's codifications.
- 208 "supera il naturale e la cosa rappresentante la rappresentata", Giacomo Dolfin in *La Prima Rappresentazione al Teatro Olimpico*, ed. A. Gallo (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1973), 34. Dolfin contrasted Palladio's *frons scaenae* at the Teatro Olimpico, made according to the rules of ancient architecture, as constantly beautiful, solid and true, with Scamozzi's play with the artifice of light. Serlio describes his theatrical activities in Vicenza in *Opere*, 44r, where he created a scene with perspectival paintings and a level stage that accommodated 'maravigliosi intermedij' with 'moreschi', triumphal cars and stage elephants; see Zorzi, *Le Ville e Teatri di Andrea Palladio*, 249–250. Serlio's stage design was well known to Scamozzi through his work on his father's posthumous 1584 edition of Serlio, which contained an index and a brief *Discorso* on architecture.
- 209 Angelo Ingegneri, *Della Poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (Ferrara, 1598), 62. On the staging of *Oedipus*, see Léo Schrade, *La représentation d'Edipo Tiranno au Teatro Olimpico (Vicence 1585)* (Paris, CNRS, 1960); *La Prima Rappresentazione al Teatro Olimpico*. Andrea Gabrieli and Antonio Pordenone provided the music, the translation of *Oedipus* was produced by Orsatto Giustiniani.



FIGURE 7.8 *Palladio and Scamozzi, detail of frons scaenae and scenery of Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580–85.*

COURTESY MUSEI CIVICI VICENTINI – PINACOTHECA PALAZZO CHIERICATI.

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The performance documents confirm the dramatic interest in *affetti* which strike both sound and vision and Ingegneri insists on the analogies between voice and movement as they appeal to ear and eye, as well as noting the importance of stage architecture and the creation of shadows on stage as an area of perspective.²¹⁰ In the documents and stage architecture for *Oedipus*, Serlio's

210 See Ingegneri, *Poesia rappresentativa*, 42–43, 73, on the centrality of scenic architecture in dramaturgy with criticism for playwrights who ignore the architectural dimension of

vision of theatre as fantastic invention placed within the pre-structured perspectival armature develops into a paradigmatic view of theatre as a composite whole, structured by analogies between the constituent parts or arts.

Like Camillo's theatre, Serlio's scenes could be erected anywhere and their perspectival character not only concerns the creation of a self-contained realm of artifice but generalises the relation between viewer and scene. The impersonal relationship with the viewer in perspective, whose view is the outcome of a pre-ordered construction, should not be obscured by analogies between the central line of vision and centralised political power in early modern spectacle.²¹¹ Thus portable paintings, decorations, stage designs and architecture all share similar conditions of viewing. The structure carries certain meanings and an outcome irrespective of the content, creating a continuity or continuum between individual circumstances of usage.

Serlio rehearses three characteristics of perspectival scenes: the collage of diverse elements; the idealised character of theatre, exemplified by the decorum of the tragic scene; the representation as a realm of artifice, whose fantastic character he stresses. Serlio combines the schematic character of scenographic perspective with two other pre-ordered systems of representation—print and Camillo's theatre, which seems to have provided a precedent for the organisation of his treatises on architecture.²¹² Despite its fantastic character, the

staging and on shadow creation; *ibid.*, 77, on the role of voice and on physical gesture, especially eyes. He describes homophonic singing as delighting the ears and eyes of the audience (*ibid.*, 79). On the analogy between harmony and movement as rhythm and dance, cf. Minturno, *Arte Poetica*, 355, who notes that rhythm and harmony both concern the relation of proportion in a body to movement; as one cannot have sound without movement, Minturno sees harmony as concerning the proportion of a body, rhythm (or *numero*) and its movements: "sì come nel ballo questa misura Numero si chiama; così nella Musica Harmonia . . . percioche l'Harmonia è consonanza delle voci . . . et il Tempo et il Numero è misura del movimento" ("as in dance this measure is called number, so in music it is harmony . . . since harmony is the consonance of voices and time and number is the measure of movements").

211 See for example the placing of the prince's seat in the central axis of vision in the Jonson-Jones masques at the Jacobean court, where perspective made its belated appearance in England. See Ben Jonson's introduction to the *Masque of Blacknesse* (1605).

212 Serlio named Camillo as his close friend in a will made in Venice in 1528. On their relationship, see Hart and Hicks, *Serlio on Architecture* I, xxvi; Loredana Olivato, "Dal teatro della memoria al grande teatro dell'architettura: Giulio Camillo Delminio e Sebastiano Serlio", *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio*, 21 (1979), 233–52; *idem*, "Per il Serlio a Venezia: documenti nuovi e documenti rivisitati", *Arte veneta*, 25 (1971), 284–91; Mario Carpo, *Architecture in the age of printing: orality, writing, typography, and printed images in the history of architectural theory*, trans. Sarah Benson (MA: MIT Press, 2001), 48–52; *idem*, *Metodo ed ordini nella teoria architettonica dei primi*

Serlian scene diminishes the experimental, re-creative play of its sources in Peruzzi, and advances a more topical, pre-fabricated model which may permit transformation but which undercuts the dialogic possibilities of theatre.

Serlio's scenography suggests that once the principles of representation are contained within the perspectival schema, everything within that schema may become fantastic and ornamental, exhibiting the ingenuity of the artificer who counterfeits even *natura naturans* in the *meraviglia* of the grotto. Serlio's account of scenography in this sense has certain parallels to the wonders of super-natural artifice we saw in ancient sophistic accounts. Perspectival decoration also requires—and creates—distinctions between what is 'within' and 'without' the scene, with consequences for the role of framing. In perspectival decorations framing areas are characteristically the place where we find iconographic detail (e.g. devices, heraldry, trophies, allegorical figures) and pictorial arguments which support and situate reading of the perspectival *istoria* or vista. As we shall see, this encouraged decorative forms like the trophy or candelabra which could be appended to a support.

Cosmic Frame and Composite Artifice: The Intermedi

This combination of perspectival theatre and decorative frame also pertained to dramatic spectacles, where ornate *intermedi*, often featuring cosmological allegories or figures performing music and dance, alternated with comedies performed on perspectival sets, providing the 'cosmic' framework.²¹³ They first appear as a coherent dramatic frame, rather than varied interludes, in Castiglione's *intermedi* devised for the performance he directed of Bibbiena's *La Calandaria* in 1513 in Urbino, performed before the first documented scenic perspective, designed by Girolamo Genga.²¹⁴ The *intermedi* concerned the theme of *concors discordia* in the alternation of martial scenes with triumphs

moderni. Alberti, *Raffaello Serlio e Camillo* (Geneva: Droz, 1993); idem, "Ancora su Serlio e Delminio. La teoria architettonica, il metodo e la riforma dell'imitazione", in *Sebastiano Serlio*, 111–114, where Carpo discusses Camillo's use of architecture to illustrate the application of a seven-level paedagogic model in *L'idea dell'eloquenza* as fundamental for the understanding of Serlio's theory.

213 The *intermedi* for the Medici wedding of 1565 concerned the tale of Cupid and Psyche; the 1586 *intermedi* to Bardi's *L'amico fido* featured tableaux of the elements, with triumphs of Neptune and Juno and the coming of spring with Primavera; Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* provided the inventions for *intermedi* performed in Mantua in 1584 and 1598.

214 In a letter to Canossa, Castiglione described them as "continuata, e separata dalla Commedia"; see Antonio Pinelli, Orietta Rossi, *Genga architetto aspetti della cultura urbinata del primo 500* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1975), 213.

of Venus; if they provided a cosmic frame to the drama with its perspectival scene, they were also fantasy spectacles within it, and contained within its conditions of artifice, as Serlio signals when he links Genga's elaborate scenography and his production of *meraviglia*.²¹⁵

Late sixteenth century discussions of *intermedi* proposed them as a comic equivalent to the tragic chorus, whose dance and song imitated the movements of the heavens.²¹⁶ In these discussions, the chorus passes from being the 'cosmic' frame for the drama to become the locus where the arts come together into composite, 'universal' forms structured by the theoretical analogies between their constituent elements.²¹⁷ The *intermedi* form ornate frames to the comedies they overshadowed, like the encroaching decoration of a Mannerist room; they also show fantastic content placed within the perspectival scene, as described by Serlio.²¹⁸ Furthermore, they exhibited the universality of

215 The *intermedi* featured Jason's taking of the Golden Fleece, followed by three triumphs of the gods—Venus and Amor with lighted torches, Neptune and Juno. At the end of the *intermedi* an *amorino* explained the significance of the spectacles—the scene with Jason, including a "fiera moresca" signified war, while the three triumphs show Venus who draws the elements (Neptune, Juno) and humans from discord to love and concord. Castiglione, letter to Canossa, *ibid.*

216 See Patrizi, *La Deca Sacra, La Poetica* III, 324, on the cosmic dance of the chorus, which imitated the movements of the stars; Patrizi gives the scholiast on Pindar as his source. Ingegneri wrote of the chorus as a kind of *intermedi* in *Poesia rappresentativa*, 24–25, calling it "grave, nobile e bene accommodato intermedio della Tragedia" ("grave, noble and well-placed *intermedio* in the tragedy"). According to Claude Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata: Documentary Studies and Translations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 138, 142–48, Bardi, inventor of the 1589 *intermedi* to *La Pellegrina*, composed a *Discorso come si debba recitar Tragedia* which described the role of the chorus like that of *intermedi* and he originally wanted fifteen Sirens in *intermedio* 1, corresponding the players in the chorus, at the cost of undermining the planetary symbolism.

217 In Patrizi's *Deca istoriale* the chorus represents the full concord of the arts—song, harmonious sound and dance—in sung poetry: "Concorsero dunque . . . nella intera chorea: canto, suono armonioso, ballo" (*Deca istoriale*, 400). Cf. *ibid.*, 310: "la musica e l'intero melos fatti erano di canto, di armonia, di suoni, e di orchesi, e tutti questi con moti si faceano, e ogni moto è da tempo misurato", "the music and whole *melos* were made of song, harmony, sounds and dance and these were made with movement, and every movement is measured time". Patrizi's discussion resembles that of Minturno (see n.210). At *ibid.*, 396–7, Patrizi speaks of dance as governed by the same poetic feet which govern verse and harmony, and says that the *orchista* renders in bodily movements the things and *affetti* expressed by the poet in words.

218 The playwright Il Lasca (Anton Francesco Grazzini) composed a *madrigal burlesco* "La commedia che si duol degli intermedi", lamenting the encroachment of the *intermedi* with their "marvels" on the drama.

composite spectacles structured through the analogies between the arts: between speech, music, harmony, rhythm, movement and dance within performance, and between music and visual spectacle, as De' Rossi's account of the 1589 Florentine *intermedi* describes the musicians responding to the "harmony" of Buontalenti's perspectives.²¹⁹

These *intermedi*, which took for their theme music's cosmic and affective character, showed *harmonia mundi* turned into material for the dazzling display of synthetic, totalising artifice.²²⁰ Like Patrizi's account of ancient music-poetry in *Della Poetica*, the *intermedi* were a total spectacle which took for their theme music's cosmic and affective character.²²¹ The *intermedi* opened and closed with staging of two Platonic discussions of music, the celestial Sirens and the spindle of Necessity from the Myth of Er in *Republic* x and the gods' gift of harmony and rhythm to men in *Laws* II 653d–673a. Between these were

219 Bastiano de' Rossi, *Descrizione dell'apparato e degli'intermedi fatti per la commedia rappresentata in Firenze nelle nozze de' Serenissimo Don Ferdinando de' Medici, e Madama Cristina di Lorena, Grand Duchi di Toscana* (Florence: Marescotti, 1589), 7.

220 On the 1589 *intermedi*, invented by Giovanni Bardi and Ottavio Rinnuccini with music by Emilio de'Cavaleri, Peri, Caccini, Malvezzi and Marenzio, designed and staged by Buontalenti and performed in the Uffizi theatre with Bargagli's comedy *La pellegrina* for the wedding festivities for Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine, see Alois Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539 to 1637*, trans. George Hickenlooper (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, *Li due Orfei* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969); Zorzi, *Il teatro e la città*; Annamaria Testaverde Matteini, *L'officina delle nuvole: il Teatro Mediceo nel 1589 e gli Intermedi del Buontalenti nel Memoriale di Girolamo Seriacopi* (Milan: Associazione Amici della Scala, [1991]); James Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589. Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1996); Iain Fenlon, "Music and Festival" in *Europa Triumphans*, ed. J. Mulrayne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Margaret Shewring (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), I, 47–56; Aby Warburg, "I costumi teatrali per gli intermedi di 1589" (1895) in *La rinascita del paganesimo antico*, ed. Gertrud Bing (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1980); D.P. Walker, *Musique des Intermèdes de la Pellegrina* (Paris CNRS, 1963); idem, "La musique des intermèdes florentins de 1589 et l'humanisme", in *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1957), I, 133–44. The music and choreography of Emilio de'Cavaleri was published and Buontalenti's sketches for sets were published as engravings by Agostino Carracci and Epifanio D'Alfiano.

221 Patrizi's friendship with Bardi and his authoritative treatment of the performance of Greek theatre are noted by Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, II, 109, 136–37. On Bardi's circulation of the manuscript of *Della poetica* in the Florentine Accademia degli Alterati and discussion of the work by the academicians, see Bolzoni, *L'universo dei poemi possibili: Studi su Francesco Patrizi da Cherso* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), 99. Patrizi's *Parere* on Ariosto was written in 1583 at the request of Bardi and other members of the Accademia della Crusca; see *ibid.*, 103, 108–9. Patrizi refers to Galilei and Bardi in his treatment of his ancient poetic metre in the *Deca Istoriale*, 329–30, 354.



FIGURE 7.9 Agostino Carracci, Buontalenti's scene for the harmony of the spheres from Intermedio 1 from *Intermedi to La Pellegrina*, 1589.

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four *intermedi* devoted the contest of the Muses and Pierades, Apollo's combat with the Pythian dragon, discussed by Patrizi as the origin of verse, a *maga* and fiery daemons followed by an infernal scene, and a marine tableau featuring Arion.²²²

The *intermedi* represented dramatically (not musically) the theme dear to the Florentine Camerata, the force of ancient monodic music, while their spectacular performances of Platonic myth proclaimed the composite musical representation as a *kosmos* in all senses, and in the most lavish and ornate manner.²²³ Of these performances, Palisca however notes "in associating

²²² For Apollo's combat as the origin of verse, see Patrizi, *Deca istoriale*, 196–97; De' Rossi in his *Descrizione*, 42, notes the use of iambic and spondaic feet in Apollo's dance. The Pythian *intermedio* was staged as a recreation of ancient pantomime as described in the *Onomasticon* of Jullius Pollux. On Apollo's combat with Python, see also Lelio Giraldi, *De deis gentium historia Syntagma* VII, in *Opera* (Basel: Guarinus, 1580), 215.

²²³ The theorists associated or familiar with the Camerata (Girolamo Mei, Jacopo Peri, Ottavio Rinuccini) like Patrizi in *Deca istoriale*, 325, 331, promoted the notion that ancient tragedies had been sung in their entirety, as presented in Peri's *Euridice* (1600), seen as

the harmony of the spheres with these other myths Bardi relegated it to the realm of fiction".²²⁴ This relegation is consonant with Patrizi's cosmology in *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591), which postulated space (*spatium*) as first principle and divided the universe into three realms: the infinite space of the light filled Empyrean, free of bodies, the 'aetheric' world in which the stars move freely and our 'elementary' sublunar realm.²²⁵ This rejection of the fixed spheres undermines notions of *harmonia mundi* and suggests why Patrizi's genealogy of *furor* develops into a poetics of *meraviglia*.²²⁶

Lively Ornament in the Perspectival Room

If a space to be decorated is seen in terms of surfaces to be transformed by illusion, then the 'melting' of the walls into vistas becomes a mere point of departure. Sandström traces the modes by which painters from the Quattrocento signalled images 'disclosed' through decorative frames and arches as objects, rather than figures revealed by the opening of an illusionist

the first opera. Patrizi's discussions of music in the *Deca istoriale* in terms of verbal and rhythmic expression—of *nomos* or *melos* rather than polyphony or counterpoint—accord with the arguments of Bardi, Mei and Galilei on the expressive affect of monody and its status as the true and ancient form of music; see *ibid.*, 360, on harmony and rhythm as following words in ancient poetry.

- 224 Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 190. On the 'Pythagorean' themes in Renaissance music theory, on early instances of scepticism concerning *harmonia universalis* in Salutati and Pontano and the growing preoccupation with *affetti*, founded in the emotive impact of song, see *ibid.*, 181–90. The movement from a concept of music as cosmic harmony to a rhetoric of affect appears also in France, from the academy of Baïf to the shifting views of Marin Mersenne; see Frances Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: Warburg Institute, 1947); Brigitte van Wymeersch, "The Muses and Musical Inspiration in Early Modern France: The Case of Pontus de Tyard and Mersenne", in *The Muses and their Afterlife in Post-Classical Europe*, ed. Kathleen Christian, Clare Guest and Claudia Wedepohl (London: Warburg Institute, Turin: Nino Aragno, 2014), 155–69.
- 225 Patrizi's discussion of space, physical and mathematical appears in the three opening books of *Pancosmia*, the final section of *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591). These books were published in substantially the same form in Ferrara in 1587 as *De rerum natura libri II priores*, *alter de spacio physica*, *alter de spacio mathematico* and *Della nuova geometria libri XVI*. See J. Henry, 'Francesco Patrizi of Cherso's Concept of Space and its Later Influence', *Annals of Science*, 36, 1979, 549–75; E.E. Ryan, 'The *Panaugia* of Franciscus Patritius: from the light of experience to the first light', in *Francesco Patrizi filosofo platonico nel crepuscolo del Rinascimento*, ed. P. Castelli (Florence: Olschki, 2002), 181–95.
- 226 Patrizi worked on *Della poetica* at the same time as his writings on space in *De rerum natura*. In a letter of 27 November 1589 to Baccio Valori he speaks of sending him the index of *Nova de universis philosophia* with the *Deca disputata*; see *Francesco Patrizi: Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, ed. D. Aguzzi Barbagli, Florence, 1975, 70–71.

vista.²²⁷ Bellini works with these ambiguities in the *Pesaro Altarpiece*, where the vista created by the aperture in Christ's throne could be a perspectival painting. By the third decade of the Cinquecento the levels of fictitiousness in the illusory layers and openings have multiplied into a complex game of artifice. Raphael's followers show the ease with which perspectival decoration as an opening in the solid walls of the room may be transformed into the illusion of the room as a gallery where all the figurations apposite to a given theme within a given place are brought together. These images are displayed through actors, objects and epigraphy and played out by means of affective narration. Theatre as a structure of visual organisation for the depiction of a history exists alongside or subordinate to the theatre 'of', which concerns the amassing, ordering and display of all the (visual) arguments that a subject 'contains'. The room whose decorations are presented as layers of insets and accretions depicts its *concetto* in terms of variety and ornament which the viewer is challenged to bring to synthesis.

Such complexity erodes distinctions between framing ornament and ornament in the sense of praiseworthy figural qualities or attributes, as discussed above. The movement of ornament 'within' the figure as a stylistic quality is best exemplified by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel and by Raphael's Sibyls in the Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria della Pace and personified moral virtues above the lawgivers in the Stanza della Segnatura.²²⁸ In the Raphael decorations, the graceful torsions and colour harmonies of the female figures appear against simple backgrounds within a lunette. This absorption of ornament into the figure contrasts with the decorations of Raphael's workshop, where ornamentation appears in the play between the variety of materials illusionistically rendered. In the ornate style of central Italian mid-Cinquecento decorations, ornament as figural quality comes together with the multiplicity of illusionist decorative details. Hall says of mid-century *maniera* painting: "Ornaments seem to be charged with the task of multiplying beauty . . . qualitatively".²²⁹ In the Sistine vault, the *ignudi* take the place of ornamental motifs.²³⁰ The frescoes, depicting the creating and adorning of the world and typological

227 Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, 122, cites Carlo Crivelli's *Beatus Ferretti* (c. 1489, National Gallery, London) where a garland casts a shadow on the sky behind it, denoting that the image behind the garland is a separate panel.

228 See Varchi, *Lezzione* 1, TA, I, 39.

229 Hall, *After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 167.

230 On the painted architecture of the vault, see Sandström, *Levels*, 173–86, who sees the Arch of Constantine as a major influence: "Mantegna and Pintoricchio . . . devised the grammar [of the art of decoration] . . . only with Michelangelo was the mural system itself transmuted into a living language" (*ibid.*, 184).



FIGURE 7.10 Raphael, *Sibyls*, Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria della Pace, Rome, 1514.

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

allegories of redemption, are the most monumental depiction of ornament conceived ‘within’ figures, in their grace, expressive posture and *cangiante* colour. As framing figures, the *ignudi* also show this conception of ornament placed outside the histories depicting *ornatus mundi*. When Vasari praised the *ignudi* in the borders of Clovio’s miniatures, such as the *Farnese Hours*, he spoke of the “beautiful variety of their bizarre ornament”.²³¹

Sculptural (or faux sculptural) figures deployed as ornamental frames invite the viewer to partake in a world of illusion, mediating the qualities of the artwork—such as verisimilitude, grace or liveliness—to the spectator. As central objects of figural invention, sculptural *ignudi* go beyond other ornamental ‘meta-figures’ like the *ninfa* or the putto, the bearer of attributes or figure of deixis or agency who shows what has been made visible. Ornament thus treated becomes an intermediary zone where the poetic qualities of artifice which display its ‘praise’ are conveyed to the spectator. In place of the dialectic of form and formlessness in pattern motifs, there is a graduated continuum of ‘liveliness’ between the scene represented and the spectator’s space. This is the handling of ornament displayed in Annibale Carracci’s decorations in Sala di Giasone (1584) in Palazzo Fava, Bologna and in the Salone (1591–92) of Palazzo Magnani, Bologna, culminating in the Galleria of Palazzo Farnese, Rome (1597–1608).

²³¹ Vasari, *Vite* VI, 216–17. Vasari ends his *Life* by calling Clovio a new, small-scale Michelangelo.



FIGURE 7.11 *Annibale and Agostino Carracci, Battle of the Romans and the Sabines, Palazzo Magnani, Bologna, c. 1590.*

COURTESY COLLEZIONE D'ARTE UNICREDIT BANCA, BOLOGNA.

PHOTO: M. BALDASSARI.

The conception of decorations as a complex of figurations also raises questions about the status of background and surface. In deconstructions of the relation of frame and history, such as Rosso's *Galerie de François I* at Fontainebleau (1535–39) the liveliness of the frame equals, if not surpasses the histories. Rosso recognises that synthetic decorations which combine different materials can also play with scale and decorative modes, hence the stucco-work takes the form of three-dimensional recreations of tapestry borders and *ignudi* which dwarf the image that they frame, as well as figuring miniature, subsidiary images such as devices.²³² Most striking in these 'conceited' decorations is the stucco that seems to grow out from the wall into scrolls of strapwork, evolving into putti, caryatids, *ignudi*, garlands, masks and scenes in relief which protrude over the painted areas.

Zerner contrasts *grotesche* with the illusion of weight and relief in Rosso's ornament; the engravings of the *Galerie* diffused a style in which relief becomes a

²³² Cf. Primaticcio's chamber for Madame D'Estampes, where heavy stucco festoons and elongated female figures frame oval panels. The decorations stabilise Rosso's innovations into a rich decorative style. Primaticcio's facility recalls his work for Giulio Romano in the Sala degli Stucchi in Palazzo Tè.



FIGURE 7.12 Rosso, *Galerie de François I*, Fontainebleau, 1535–37.

PHOTO: CHÂTEAU DE FONTAINEBLEAU.

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prominent ornamental quality.²³³ Summers discusses *rilievo* as the quality connected with the artificial illusion of life, and the link between relief and ornateness is expounded in antiquity by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The revival of stucco-work and its reproduction in engraving can extend the conception of a continuum of artifice into the wall itself, ‘enlivening’ it. In strapwork, the frame becomes a material transformed and animated by the inventions of the artist. In this ‘enlivened’ wall, the frame threatens to be simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, exhibiting a potentially endless series of possible associations and connections.

The frame no longer holds the conditions for emergence, the dialectic between undifferentiated and differentiated; it is itself conceived as a substance from which forms appear, drawn forth by the imaginative ‘ideas’ of the artist. It is thus subject to the same conditions of invention as all other forms which artists draw out from the potentiality of matter, but it performs a different role, in exhibiting or ‘conveying’ the continuity of artifice which enlivens all materials and registers of decoration. What is disappearing here is the pre-metaphysical dialectics figured by ornament, the depth it carries

233 Henri Zerner, “Les estampes et le style de l’ornement”, in *La Galerie François Ier au Château de Fontainebleau. Revue de l’art*, 16–17 (1972), 119.

by its relation to the other, the background, the unformed. The awareness of this loss is apparent in the insistence with which the chaotic is brought into the continuum of figuration from the later Quattrocento, most notably in the success of the *grottesche*. The representations of processes of generation in later Renaissance art show the tension between contraries as a subject matter: art's "discovery" of the informing of matter, by which it supposedly re-grounds itself. In this sense we can understand better the fascination with the emergence of form from the inchoate, as in the grottoes which are such a feature of Mannerist ornament.²³⁴ Such spectacles of actualisation turn their ontological content into a display of artifice.

The chaotic, formless elements thus become a requirement of the continuum of representation, or displays of wilful, skilful deformation, claimed as examples of *concors discordia* or as exhibitions of ornamental design.²³⁵ Such figurations, lacking moral or dramatic purpose, go beyond imitation of antiquity or the tradition of monstrosities in marginal areas, as decried by Bernard of Clairvaux; they respond to the changed relationship of frame and framed in the continuum of scenic representation.²³⁶

234 See Bredekamp, *Lure of antiquity*, 49–51, on grottoes as location for automata which display artificial 'life' and on the "anthropomorphic wombs" of Palissy and Salomon de Caus.

235 See Comanini's poem on Arcimboldo's *Vertumnus*, where ugliness is said to advance beauty. Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 4, 1448b 10–12, on our delight in the imitation of the repulsive.

236 Bernard, *Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem*, 12.29.

The City Recovered, Triumph and Time

Hypnerotomachia

We suggested that in Castiglione the creation of a continuum of artifice which touches everything requires the patterning of contraries or opposites and that Castiglione discussed time's destructive force as an element in such patterning. Celebratory *renovatio* has its counterpart in the melancholy contemplation of time as decay. While laments over the decay of antiquity are well-established in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance the *tempus edax rerum* topos becomes an element in the recovery of the antiquity, involving a complex temporality. In Landino's *Xandra* II. 30, Rome "teaches" how time devours all through the spectacle of her decayed statues and buildings. Castiglione's sonnet "Superbi colli, e voi sacre ruine" evokes *tempus edax rerum*, finding consolation in the thought that time's destruction, which has vanquished Rome's glories, will also bring the poet's torments to an end.¹ Sannazaro's "Ad ruinas Cumarum" develops from the pathos of one ruined site to the dissolution which comes to all imperial cities—Rome, Venice, Naples—as to all peoples.²

Prior to Castiglione, Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (corrected edition 1504), a recreation of pastoral romance which for centuries inspired narrative and dramatic imitations shows how loss, absence and damage are located within idealised artifice. It is an exemplar of *varietas* which draws on classical, Neolatin and vernacular sources, with Virgil as central point of reference.³ These sources are combined to create a synthetic genre, called by Francesco Erspamer "at once lyric, eclogue, satire, apology, theatre, narrative and encyclopaedia".⁴ The work exhibits a conspicuously refined, allusive style and anticipates a highly refined audience.⁵ In its use of topoi, *Arcadia* invites comparison with Bembo's

1 Lazaro Buonamici's Latin version of the sonnet transforms the last lines on the poet's suffering to a Horatian contrast between time's destruction and the endurance of writing: "Calliope aeternum vivere sola posset".

2 Ibid., 74–79.

3 See Carol Kidwell, *Sannazaro and Arcadia* (London: Duckworth, 1993); William Kennedy, *Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983).

4 *Arcadia*, ed. Francesco Erspamer (Milan: Mursia, 1990), 25: "insieme lirica, bucolica, satira, apologo, teatro (i canti amebel), racconto, enciclopedia". Sannazaro used Pliny extensively.

5 On the pleasure taken by Renaissance readers in the allusive artifice of *Arcadia*, see the 1596 commenatry of Giovambattista Massarengo quoted in Kennedy, *Sannazaro*, 116.

Gli Asolani, but the contrast between the two goes beyond the choice of varied as against selective imitation to the repeated allusions to darkness, loss and death which appear in tension to Sannazaro's rarefied style.

The association of pastoral and mourning appears already in Theocritus, and pastoral in a culture of antiquarianism can contain the theme of reversion, as cities (primarily Rome) return to the wasteland from which they arose. Sannazaro's most famed creation in his Latin poetry, the piscatory eclogue, adds to this theme the prominence of Proteus as a marine god who reveals future and past events (*De partu virginis, Piscatoria*).⁶

The artifice which touches everything in *Arcadia* involves an insistent orientation towards loss. The juxtaposition of delicate refinement and journeying to darkness or scenes of death in *Arcadia* gives a foretaste of preoccupations with the duality of preciousness and chaos in Mannerist gardens, before its inspiration of the idealised nostalgia of the Arcadian images of Poussin and Guercino.⁷ In these works, the opposition between recovery of antique beauty and loss is absorbed into the idealisation of style and genre, making pastoral an elegiac variety of the grand style that elevates all things into its 'universal' beauty.

The Hadean topography of *Arcadia* concerns not only tombs and funerals but visits to the temples of pastoral gods where magical rites are performed (IX), the sacred wood (X), the cave of Pan (X), the grotto where Hecate and Chaos are invoked, and sacrifice made to the *Madre Terra* (X). This topography culminates in a dreamlike descent into the subterranean caves from which the world's rivers arise (XII); from here the protagonist returns to Naples where the work ends with a lament for a dead nymph, thought to be Pontano's wife Arianna. The references to contemporary Naples through the work undermine the notion of *Arcadia* as a solely idyllic or conventional place.⁸

The shepherd poet's ritual veneration at the Arcadian tombs is a figure for the Humanist's relation to antiquity, both recovered and dead. *Arcadia* shares this theme with the stylistically divergent *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), where the pursuit of antiquity is a prolonged erotic quest through the memories and fragments of the past for a phantasmal nymph who dissolves as the

6 See Chapter 6, n. 2. *Pisc.* IV, "Proteus", recounts the history of Naples and its poetic tradition, concluding that "grata quies patriae, sed omnis terra est sepulchrum".

7 Sannazaro's topography of grottos and sepulchres is essentially Virgilian. On later, elegiac pastoral, see Panofsky, "Et in *Arcadia Ego*: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition" (1936), repr. in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1970), 340–67.

8 The felled orange tree (*arancio*) in the poet's disturbing dream in Prose XII is interpreted as a reference to the misfortunes of the Aragonesi.

narrator embraces her. Imitation of antiquity contains the acknowledgement of difference over time, irrecoverable loss, and obscurity: the more refined the artifice, the more such difference obtrudes. Sannazaro works with two backgrounds, antiquity and nature, attempting to recover the first and subsume the second into *imitatio*. Thus the artifice which touches everything in *Arcadia* shows nature re-emerge in the aspect of opacity and mystery. For example, the Virgilian and hexaemeral theme of the exploration of the source of the world's rivers in *Arcadia* XII, is rendered as a mysterious descent to origins.⁹ This chthonic sense of nature informs the nostalgic atmosphere of the work and the pull towards deepening levels of loss which it shares with the conclusion of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Oppositions between form or light and formlessness and darkness or absence pass into the theme of the work, rendered in temporal terms of recovery versus loss.

In *Arcadia* and the *Hypnerotomachia* this temporality affects the poetic locus as the site for the recovery of antiquity. The *Hypnerotomachia* attempts to create a context which can give fragmentary remains their meaning. As word-image ensemble, the work forms an excellent prelude to discussion of verbal-visual relations and configurations of antique fragments. It displays the relationship of *varietas* as encyclopaedism to 'theological' allegory, the understanding of ornaments as precious fragments, the representation of antiquity as object of recovery and loss. It also concerns the role of emblems as 'mosaics' and 'hieroglyphs', and the use of triumph and spectacle as means of exhibiting and integrating antiquities. These themes interact at various levels although examination requires serial treatment. The work also links the antiquarian idyll of fragments dispersed through a topography as topoi for poetic meditation with the wandering, erring character of romance.¹⁰

The artistic form of the *Hypnerotomachia* should be seen as working together with its textual character.¹¹ The texts bring together *ekphraseis* of decorations

9 See Virgil, *Georgic* 4; Tasso repeats the theme in *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Canto 14. A similar hexaemeral evocation appears in *Faerie Queene* IV.11, where the rivers gather in the hall of Proteus for the marriage of Thames and Medway.

10 On the pleasure of the digressive, apparently non-teleological variety of romance, see Giraldi Cinthio, *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*.

11 For the text-image interaction, see *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, ed. Giovanni Pozzi and Lucia Ciapponi (Padua: Antenore, 1980), henceforth Pozzi-Ciapponi, II, 38–40; *Francesco Colonna. Biografia e Opere*, ed. Giovanni Pozzi and Maria Teresa Casella (Padua: Antenore, 1959), henceforth Pozzi-Casella, II, 149–58; *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, facsimile with commentary and modern Italian translation ed. Marco Ariani and Mino Gabriele (Milan: Adelphi 1998), henceforth Ariani-Gabriele, II, xcvi–cviii. Pozzi-Ciapponi II, 38, distinguishes between images which clarify the objects described, and images which have a

with the notion of rhetorical ornament as precious artefact to be 'set'. The synthetic vernacular of the *Hypnerotomachia* which combines Venetian and fourteenth century Tuscan usages with Latinisms and Hellenisms was quickly recognised as an example of bad eclectic style, as when Castiglione has a speaker warn that a courtier who wishes to converse gracefully should not use 'parole di Poliphilo'.¹² The authorship of the illustrations, with their innovative two-page spreads and 'hieroglyphics', remains a matter of speculation.¹³

The controversies over authorship are well-known, as is the two-book structure of the work; the first, longer book relates a dream vision with a journey through a series of antiquities in an erotic quest for a nymph, Polia, who is both a figure for antiquity and associated with earthly Venus.¹⁴ Book II is

merely 'illustrative' role. Ariani-Gabriele II, cvi–viii, notes that the insertion of illustrations alongside the text is typical of contemporary scientific treatises, rather than literary illustrations which appear at the head of the chapter as a vignette.

- 12 Castiglione, *Cortegiano* III.70, 351. Croce in "La 'Hypnerotomachia Polifili'", *Quaderni della critica*, 17–18 (1950), 46–54, judged the work written in "jargon". Mitchell, "Archaeology", 462–63, quotes Antonio Agustín's description of the work as the "frenzied raptures of a pedant". See Pozzi-Ciapponi II, 12 ff. on the use of Trecento Tuscan. On the *Hypnerotomachia* as a vernacular version of 'Apuleian' Latinity of Bolognese Humanists such as Beroaldo, with its use of diminutives and exotic words, see *ibid.*, 11–12; McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation*, 206, 216, 273, 277.
- 13 Artists' monograms appear in two images: "b" appears beneath the figure of a dolphin in the lowest row of 'hieroglyphs' (sig. c1r) and "b" appears in the lower right hand corner of the image of Poliphilo asleep (sig. a6 v). These signatures appear in other Venetian woodcuts of the same period, including Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1491), Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1492), Terence's *Comedies* (1497), the *Gospels and Epistles* (1490) and the Malermi Bible (1490). Charles Mitchell, "Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy", in *Italian Renaissance Studies* ed. E. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 455–83, associates the *Hypnerotomachia* with the syllogai of Felice Feliciano or Ciriaco D'Ancona's drawings and descriptions of emotional excitement at the discovery of antiquities. Pozzi and Ciapponi discount the Feliciano-Ciriaco link in "La cultura figurativa di Francesco Colonna e l'arte veneta", *Lettere italiane* 14, 2 (1962), 151–69, in favour of similarities with the decorative motifs in Lombardi tombs.
- 14 The most convincing evidence gives the author as the Venetian Dominican grammar teacher Francesco Colonna, 1433–1527, who studied at Padua and spent his career in Treviso and Venice, notably at ss. Giovanni e Paolo, whose opulence and relaxed rule was described by the German Dominican Felix Faber in *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Aegypti peregrinationem*; see Pozzi-Ciapponi II, 13–4, 17; Pozzi-Casella I, 5–106; Ariani-Gabriele II, lxx–lxxi. Internal evidence includes the North Italian-Venetian vernacular, the topographic references and the Treviso setting of Book II. Documentary evidence rests chiefly on the acrostic formed by the initial letters of the 38 chapters of the work, which spell "Poliam frater franciscus columna peramavit"—Brother Francesco Colonna

Polia's narrative, set in contemporary Treviso, which tells of her conversion from worship of Diana to that of Venus. The second book, with its Boccaccio-like humour emphasised by the illustrations, inverts the Christian narrative of ascent to heavenly love and stresses the profane character of the work.¹⁵ This culminates as Poliphilo is finally about to consummate his love for Polia, at which point she melts into air. As Poliphilo has prized carnal over spiritual love, so he finishes with a dissolving phantom in place of the *alta fantasia* of spiritual illumination which guides Dante to theophany as the end of love in *Paradiso*.

The tone and intent of the work are notoriously hard to gauge. The combination of intricate antiquarian detail and licentiousness is perplexing; it appears comic but it is unclear if it is intentionally comic, and, if so, at what the comedy is directed beyond the amusement of an erudite audience. The most obvious level of irony concerns Platonic fable, both in the cosmological-encyclopaedic tradition of Capella and the Chartres school and the contemporary Neoplatonic "philosophies of love".¹⁶ This subversion applies also to the

greatly loved Polia; see Pozzi-Ciapponi 11, 4, n.1; Ariani-Gabriele 11, lxiv; E. Fumagalli, "Due esemplari dell'*Hypnerotomachia poliphili* di Francesco Colonna", *Aevum* 66, 2 (1992), 419–32. The acrostic was identified in the first French translation of Jean Martin, printed by Jacques Kerver, Paris 1546. Identifications of Colonna as author appear in early sixteenth century inscribed copies in Cambridge University Library and the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (Pozzi-Ciapponi 11, 36–7). Leandro Alberti, *De viris illustribus Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Bologna 1517, 154v, mentions Colonna's composition of a book in *volgare* which shows his "varied and manifold *ingenium*". Pozzi-Casella 1, 124, doc. 50, list a 1501 order to repay the Dominican Order for expenses incurred in publication of a book; Pozzi-Ciapponi 11, 16 discuss the author's dependence on the manuscript Greek lexicon of Gioacchino Torriani (Marciano greco x 17), who became general of the Dominican Order in 1487, and was possibly the source for the Hebrew in the text.

- 15 For comparison to the *Decameron* printed in Venice in 1492 which included obscene images, see Rosemary Trippe, "The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Image, Text and Vernacular Poetics", *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 (2002), 1222–58. For inversion of Christian iconographic conventions, see sig. C^{5r}, where Polia laments the unconscious Poliphilo (overwhelmed by desire) in a posture that recalls the Magdalene mourning the dead Christ; sig. z^{8r}, showing the tomb of Adonis, with a statue of Venus suckling a child like the Madonna. Venus, described in prurient language, is semi-nude and the epigraph reads "Impura suavitas". Ariani-Gabriele 11, 1087 n.11 cite Fulgentius, linking Adonis, born from the incestuous Myrrha, with *impura suavitas*. The epigraph is surrounded by scenes of Venus mourning the dead Adonis, again recalling Christian *pietà*.
- 16 I concur with Pozzi-Ciapponi on the profane and obscene character of the work, as opposed to Dronke's reading of it in the tradition of "instructive romance", introduction to *Hypnerotomachia* (Zaragoza: Ediciones del Pórtico, 1981), 24. Rabelais' luxurious

other tradition of spiritualised eros, the Petrarchan tradition whose language and ideals are undermined throughout the work. Unlike Beatrice and Laura, Polia does not raise the protagonist from carnal to spiritual eros but keeps him in the realm of material multiplicity to which her name presumably alludes. The work seems to hold a similar relation to contemporary allegorical, lyrical and Humanist literature to that which Lucian held to philosophy or Apuleius to epic.¹⁷ Apuleius' *Golden Ass* is indeed one of the ancient sources most heavily used by Colonna, alongside Vitruvius, Pliny, Ovid and Sextus Pompeius. Like the *Golden Ass*, the *Hypnerotomachia* uses an over-erudite, ornate style in a licentious narrative which concludes with the epiphany of a goddess.

The comic rendition of 'sacred allegories' and voyeuristic lust, depicted with some humour in the woodcuts, seems to leave little possibility for a non-ironic reading of the fable of love's mysteries.¹⁸ The relation to contemporary antiquarian learning is more difficult. The work exhibits a great effort of study, including use of oriental languages, yet shows that study put to apparently frivolous uses that stress the worldliness of antiquarian erudition, and hint at its vanity.¹⁹ It opens with a title which tells us that all human things are

monastery Thélème in *Gargantua* 1.52–58, with its single rule of "do what you will" may allude to the *Hypnerotomachia*. For allusions to Capella and Alan of Lille in the work, see Ariani-Gabriele and Pozzi and Ciapponi, "La cultura figurativa", 165, on the jeweled planetary decoration of the room of Eleutheria as derived from the crown of Nature in *De planctu naturae*.

- 17 Alberti, whose *De re aedificatoria* Colonna used extensively, is also a translator of Lucianic fable. On Humanist translations and imitations of Lucian, see David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins. Humour and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); *Lucian of Samosata Vivus et Redivivus* ed. Christopher Ligota and Letizia Panizza (London: The Warburg Institute; Turin: Aragno Editore 2007); E. Mattioli, *Luciano e l'umanesimo* (Naples: Istituto per gli studi storici, 1980).
- 18 See for example the Judgement of Paris scene where Poliphilo chooses voluptuous life over contemplative and active life; the scene would seem to parody contemporary Neoplatonic fable, such as Ficino's use of the three lives theme in his *Philebus* commentary 11a.
- 19 The printing of Arabic and more accurate Hebrew at sig. h⁸r, illustrating three gates to contemplative, active and voluptuous life was a typographic innovation; 'Arabic' appears also in a Greek-Arab inscription at sig. b⁷r. On the Arabic inscriptions, see K.H. Dannenfeldt 'The Renaissance Humanists and the Knowledge of Arabic', *Studies in the Renaissance* 2 (1955), 96–117; A.M. Piemontese 'Le iscrizioni arabe nella *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*' in *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini (London: The Warburg Institute, 1999), 199–220, who demonstrates that the inscriptions are legible and describes their similarity to Arabic in manuscripts in the library at Urbino and in the writings of Pico. The Hebrew inscription was the first use of a type cut by Aldus, later used in the 1523 Aldine *Alphabetum hebraicum*, the "first Hebrew language primer printed by

nothing more than a dream (“Poliphili Hypnerotomachia ubi humana omnia non nisi somnium esse ostendit”) and ends with two Latin epitaphs to Polia, which seem to identity her with antiquity. Polia is said to live buried (“vivis sepulta”) and to be the finest flower of all virtue, yet the epitaph concludes by lamenting that “a flower so dried up will never revive” (“flos sic exsiccatus / nunquam reviviscit”).²⁰ Here the *Hypnerotomachia* goes beyond a reinvention of Lucianic or Apuleian fable.

The mingled Platonic, Petrarchan and antiquarian allusions expose the futility of Poliphilo's quest to possess Polia. The lover's pilgrimage to Venus as the love that animates and binds the world illustrates a confusion between revelation of the all and possession of otherness. Poliphilo is told that the figure whom he must find in his quest for Polia is the final cause (“Telosia”), whom we might identify with Venus. Book One does culminate in an epiphany of the goddess in a fountain at the centre of Cytherea, in a powerful evocation of sexual ecstasy.²¹ This revelation is however undercut by the final delusion of Book Two, where the lovers' conjunction is a fleeting dream.

The Venus of the *Hypnerotomachia* is certainly not the Platonic Aphrodite; at most she may be a voluptuary Pandemos or Venus Genetrix as represented in the famous image of a fountain which names her the mother of all.²² The unveiling of Venus does not reveal the transcendent as the source of sameness but momentary possession of a figure—Polia—who personifies the multifarious character of antiquity. The quest for the lost beloved in the *Hypnerotomachia* is not a philosophical or spiritual journey but a philological

a Christian for Christians”; see description of Seth Jerchow, University of Pennsylvania Center for Judaic Studies Library, <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/exhibit.toc.html>, retrieved 23 August 2012.

- 20 Vincenzo Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura a Roma tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 3–5, relates the excitement amongst Humanists at the finding of a preserved body of a Roman girl in her tomb on the Appian Way in 1485; Barkan, *Unearthing*, 57–61, develops the notion of antiquarianism as a raising or encountering the dead; cf. Poliziano's praise of Ficino for reviving Platonism like Orpheus recalling Eurydice from Hades in the final pages of *Miscellanea* I, in *Opera*, K2v: “veram (ni fallor) Eurydicen, hoc est amplissimi iudicii Platoniam sapientiam, revocavit ab inferis”. For Ciriaco of Ancona's celebration of antiquarianism as conversation with the dead, see Chapter 7.
- 21 The deflowering ritual at the culmination of the lovers' initiation to Venus in 1.23, where Poliphilo is given an arrow to rend the veil inscribed “Hymen” covering the image of Venus, recalls the lover's taking of the rose in *Roman de la Rose* 21553.
- 22 Sig. e¹r. The fountain shows a reclining female nude from whose breasts water flows with three aroused satyrs, one of whom reveals her. The text reads *panta tokadi*, corrected to a genitive plural (*pantōn*) in the image.



FIGURE 8.1 Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499, sig. err. Fountain of Venus. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1923.

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

quest which dramatises ‘mysteries’ concerning our relation to antiquity, whose paradigm is nature ordered. Thus Venus’ locus, Cytherea, is described as a circular garden where all plants are arranged in taxonomic order. The *ornatus mundi* becomes an encyclopaedic, quasi mnemonic arrangement. This encyclopaedic totality corresponds to Poliphilo’s dream of repossession of antiquity, figured in union with Polia and continuously highlighted by its contrary—loss and the fragmentary character of memory or *memorie*.

This dominates the longest antiquarian exploration of the narrative, the descent to the necropolis with tombs of those who have died for love, the Polyandron whose name echoes Polia.²³ If universal nature has its counter-image in the topography of Hadean ruins where Poliphilo searches for Polia, rituals are the means by which the fragmentary is made to appear whole. The series of edifices and gardens described by Poliphilo are scenes for a continuum of ceremonies—ablution, banquet, rite—but most of all triumphs, splendidly illustrated, which become a means of narrative progression.²⁴

The triumphs in the *Hypnerotomachia* display antiquities and celebrate gods of love, fertility and seasonal generation—Bacchus, Vertumnus, Pomona, the loves of Jupiter and Cupid. They start as Poliphilo meets Polia, and culminate with the two brought in a triumph of Cupid to the heart of Cytherea where the theophany of Venus takes place. They are thus linked to the theme of erotic possession, which has its classical sources in the pageant of personifications in Ovid’s *Amores* and the triumph of love described by Lactantius 1.11 where the other gods, including Jupiter, appear in Cupid’s procession. Allusion to Petrarch’s *Triumph* would seem to work ironically, given Petrarch’s use of triumph to give providential meaning to historical content and the defeat of Cupid by the chaste Laura. However, illustrations of Petrarch’s *Triumphus cupidinis* show a Cupid figure, generally on an elaborate support resembling an ornate, flame-filled fountain. He is shown in movement, shooting with his limbs flexed, frequently in elegant or vigorous *contrapposto*—details not

23 On the epigraphy in the Polyandron, see Martine Furno, *Une ‘Fantasie’ sur l’antique: le gout pour l’épigraphie funéraire dans l’Hypnerotomachia Poliphili de Francesco Colonna* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), 96, who calls the Polyandron an attempt to realise a luxurious epigraphic sylloge to rival those of Maracanova and Feliciano; idem, “Imaginary architecture and antiquity: the Fountain of Venus in Francesca Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*”, in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, 70–82. On antique *polyandria* as antique funeral monuments inscribed with epigrams, see Fantuzzi and Hunter, *Tradition and innovation*, 296–97.

24 Compare the triumph with satyrs and putti by the Putti Master, frontispiece to Livy (Venice: Vindelino de Spira, 1470), fol. 24, Vienna, National Library, Inc. 5. C. 9. Bellini made various *Triumph of Bacchus* sketches in his sketchbooks.

iuerſi loci appēdeua. Gliſi rami & in qua & i la affixi, cū ſupſtitōe ſeruata
 fina al futuro anniuerſario ſtauano. Et ritornato lo anno tute q̄lle arefa-
 cte fronde racogliēdo legli ſacrarii ſimpulatori, il ſacrificio icendeuano.
 Finalmēte dappo tuto q̄to feſtiuiſſimamēte pacto & ſūma cū obſeruan-
 tia celebrato gli ferali officiū cū p̄ce ſupplīce cum religione & cerimonie
 degli dii. qualūque malo genio fugato. Il ſūmo ſacerdote Curione primo
 & poſcia dicēdo le extreme parole, illicet . Ognuno licentemēte & feſti-
 uo ritornare poteua al pprio ſcolato & lāti remeare ad la domuitione.

Cū queſto tale ordine lamia magniloqua Polia facondamēte hauēdo,
 & cū blandicelle parole tanta obſeruantia digna di laudatiſſima commē-
 datione integramente exponendo narrato, & me compendioſamēte in-
 ſtituto al ſpatioſo & harenulato litore di piaceuoli plēmyruli irruenti re-
 lixo, oue era il deſtrutto & deſerto tempio perueniſſimo.

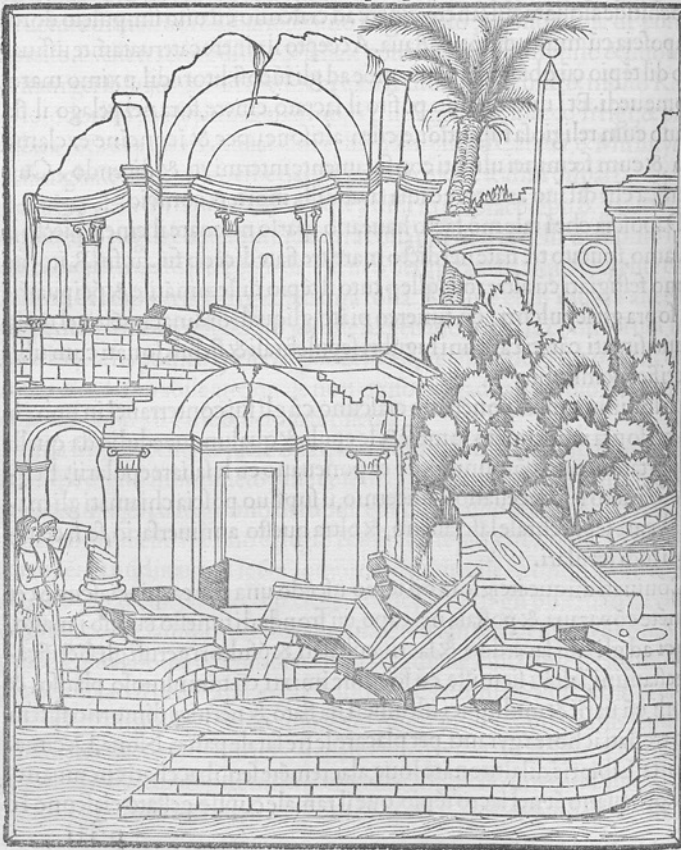


FIGURE 8.2 Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, sig. p3v. *Polyandron*.

PHOTO: POSNER MEMORIAL COLLECTION, CARNEGIE MELLON
 UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, PITTSBURGH, PA.

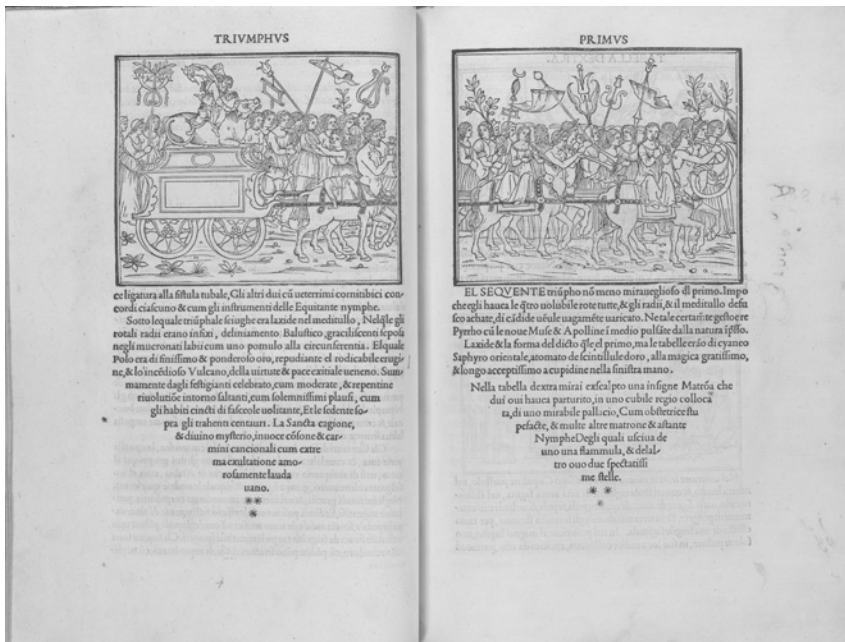


FIGURE 8.3 Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, sigs. k5v–k6r; *Triumph of Bacchus*. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1923.

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

present in Petrarch's text.²⁵ This posture, distinctly related to ideals of figural grace, suggests a sculpture made to be seen in the round, possibly hinting at his status as an idol.²⁶

The *Triumph* illustrations personify the god of desire in a way that suggests the pursuit of *all'antica* artefacts as a triumph of cupidity; in the *Hypnerotomachia*

25 See the springing figure in the Jacopo del Sellaio *Triumph of Love*, Fiesole, Museo Bandini or the ephebic athlete in the *Triumphs* of Francesco Pesellino, Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Petrarch describes Love's car simply as "un carro di foco", *Triumphus Cupidinis* 1.23.

26 Francesco Rosselli's *Triumph of Love* (Metropolitan Museum) shows Love in a pose similar to Verrocchio's *Putto and Dolphin* fountain for the Medici Palace. Sellaio's *Triumph of Love* in Fiesole shows the chariot of Love adorned with four gold statues of winged naked boys in *contrapposto*, carrying spears or lances at whose end flames flicker. On the nude statue as the symbol of paganism, the *idolum*, see Arnold Esch, "On the Reuse of Antiquity: the Perspectives of Archaeology and of the Historian", in Dale Kinney and Richard Brilliant eds. *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in the Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 20. On the 'idolatrous' character of statues in the round, see Anne Marie D'Arcy, "The Faerie King's Kunstkammer: Imperial Discourse and the Wondrous in *Sir Orfeo*", *Review of English Studies* ns 58 (2007), 10–33.



FIGURE 8.4 *Francesco Rosselli, Triumph of Love, 1480–1500. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

the *triumphus cupidinis* swells to become the mode of exploring antiquities—or antiquarianism. The triumphs are crucial to the sustained conjunction of antiquarianism and ritual in the work, in the allegedly sacred character of the artefacts examined and the ceremonial character of their display.

Poliphilo's journey modulates from antiquarian perigesis to a series of rituals which fabricate wholeness and restore the fragments to symbolic meaning. The erotic nature of these rituals is not inappropriate; recovery of the past can make it flower and reproduce. In the muddling between the fragment as a dislocated ruin and as a symbolic token lies a central theme of the book. Fragmentary state is linked to death and absence, totality represented by ritual and presence. This has its corollary in the idea that all antiquities can be 'read', exemplified by the famous pseudo-hieroglyphics, imitated from Roman frieze ornaments and 'deciphered' by Poliphilo as a sententious rebus.²⁷

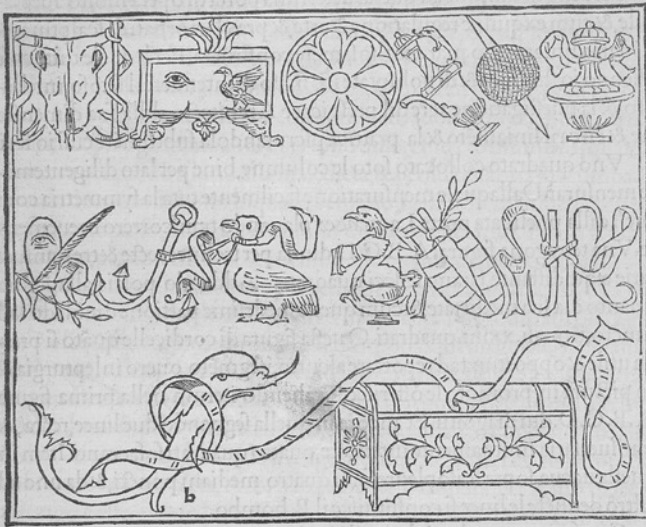
The 'emblematic' character of the work goes beyond the artefacts described or illustrated to its style.²⁸ This shows constant straining to find and 'set' ornaments of speech—rare or archaic words, coinages, words qualified by prefixes and suffixes. This verbal ornament describes visual things, while a mosaic-like effect is created with words used like *emblemata*, inserted into speech and adding 'value' to it. The *Hypnerotomachia* developed its language from the word-lists for colours or jewels and the rehearsal of derivatives of the *Cornu copiae*, one of the contemporary works most used by Colonna.²⁹ What results from the 'inlay' of varied and exotic words illustrates the warnings of Quintilian and Erasmus about the abuse of ornament when it is imported but not incorpo-

27 Sigs p^{6v}, p^{7r}, q^{7v}. The 'hieroglyphs' have been cited as proof that Colonna saw the ancient frieze fragment from San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome. Neither Pozzi nor Gabriele believe Colonna to have known the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo; Valeriano states that certain hieroglyphs were Colonna's own invention. Pozzi-Ciapponi II, 69, note the hieroglyphic sequence at sig. c^{1r} has a source in Alberti, *De re aed.* VIII.2–4, who discusses hieroglyphics as a universal visual language unlike verbal languages which may fall into incomprehension with time. Alberti composed a work on writing in code (*Dello scrivere in cifra*) and a dialogue *Anuli* in the *Intercoenales* concerning twelve gold rings, each engraved with a hieroglyphic image, which symbolise the virtues and qualities necessary to implement divine will on earth and lead the mortal to the divine. The first of the rings, symbolising divine intelligence and omnipotence, shows a winged eye—Alberti's *impresa* in his famous medal.

28 Pozzi-Ciapponi II, 11*–13*, compares Colonna's style to pictorial composition.

29 See Pozzi-Ciapponi II. Perotti and Alberti are the contemporary authors most used by Colonna. For lists of names of stones and their colours, see *Cornu copiae*, 86v ff.; for names beginning with the 'poly' prefix, *ibid.*, 132r.

retico basamento in circuito in scalpto dignissimamete tali hieraglyphi. Primo uno capitale osso cornato di boue, cum dui instrumenti agricultorii, alle corne innodati, & una Ara fundata sopra dui pedi hircini, cum una ardente fiammula, Nella faccia dellaquale era uno ochio, & uno uulture. Daposcia uno Malluio, & uno uaso Gutturnio, seque do uno Glo mo di filo, ifixo i uno Pyrono, & uno Antiquario uaso cu lorificio obtu rato.. Vna Solea cum uno ochio, cum due fronde intransuersate, luna di oliua & altra di palma politamete lorate. Vna ancora, & uno anfore. Vna Antiquaria lucerna, cum una mano tenente. Vno Temone antico, cum uno ramo di fructigera Olea circumfasciato. poscia dui Harpaguli. Vno Delphino, & ultimo una Arca reclusa. Erano questi hieraglyphi optima Scalptura in questi graphiamenti.



Lequale uetustissime & sacre scripture pensculante, cusi io le interpretai.

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FIGURE 8.5 Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, sig. cm; "Hieroglyphic" rebus.

POSNER MEMORIAL COLLECTION, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES, PITTSBURGH, PA.

rated. The work knits ancient fragments into a composite, rather than assimilating them to an ethical context and a flowing style.

This textual mosaic creates an effect both frigid and licentious, the latter accentuated by the cloying character of the incessant diminutives, frequently terms of endearment or intimacy formed on *-ulus*. This clammy, voyeuristic effect is still less attractive for the coupling with rare words and abstruse neologisms.³⁰ Other notable stylistic features include excessive use of superlatives or intensifiers with *per-* and of the gerund, present participle and verbal adjectives (endings in *-bondo*, on the model of Latin *-bundus*). All this creates a style which is centred on continued state, on the presence of things before the eyes of the narrator and the sensations—primarily excitement and desire—which they arouse in him.

The ceremonies which give wholeness and significance to visual fragments provide unsatisfactory conditions for verbal significance. The work exhibits how misleading a literal understanding of the visual references in rhetorical discussion of ornament can be. The *méprise* comes as discussions of the ornaments of speech designed for use in persuasive discourse are deployed in describing contexts of visual meaning. Ornament here ceases to illustrate praise and serves instead to awaken and amplify desire, as judicative, attributive concerns are replaced by the ubiquitous, concupiscent gaze of the narrator.

The *Hypnerotomachia* exhibits the interdependence of verbal and visual in Humanist approaches to ornament. It undermines the role of nature as paradigm for artificial *varietas* and ornament, by portraying delight in *varietas* as a desire for stimulation, for ever more qualities and accidents. The ceremonies, regalia and elaborate architecture are lavish spectacles for the senses—specifically for the ‘inner sense’ of fantasy, to which the whole ‘dream’ is finally assigned. The antique *memorie* are similarly identified with erotic recollection. The desire for antiquity becomes a dream of continuous sensual diversity—multiplicity personified as an arousing, elusive nymph. This multiplicity is pursued for its own enticing quality—its *poikilia*—but also for the suggestion that

30 Jocelyn Godwin's translation into standard modern English, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: The strife of love in a dream* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), x, provides one specimen sentence: “In this horrid and cuspidinous littoral and most miserable site of the algent and fetorific lake stood saevious Tisiphone, efforal and cruel with her viperine capillament, her meschine and miserable soul, implacably furibund” (“In questo horrendo & cuspidinoso & miserrimo sito dil algente & fetorifico laco, stava la saeviente Tisiphone efferata & crudele cum il viperino capillmento, in le meschine & miserrime anime, implacabilmente furibonda” [q'r]). The French translation, *Le songe de Poliphile* (Paris 1546) simplifies the text and reworks the images in Fontainebleau style, removing their comic lascivious character.

it emanates from the universal which can be grasped through it. Both hopes are shown to be futile; antiquity as delight in diversity cannot be possessed or confounded with participation in the universal.

This raises a last point about the *Hypnerotomachia*—the absence of the city from a work devoted to architectural description. Vitruvius and Alberti are used heavily; temples, gardens, palaces, cemeteries, spectacle buildings and monuments of the most varied kind are discussed at exhaustive length, but they do not exist in a civic context.³¹ In place of the city, the *Hypnerotomachia* has the Polyandron, a necropolis, and Cytherea, the circular Venus isle or earthly paradise with its jewelled edifices, encyclopaedic planting and an amphitheatre at its heart. The *Hypnerotomachia* combines the gardens and pleasure buildings of an erotic adventure with monumental remains. What links the commemorative architecture of pyramids, obelisks and tombs with the *locus amoenus* of the nymphs is that all these buildings are ornamental—and as such they all become objects of desire under the concupiscent gaze of Poliphilo. A later writer inspired by Colonna, Bérolalde de Verville, used descriptions of topography, architectural settings or the ornament of a room to embody the journey to encyclopaedic knowledge.³² By contrast, the *Hypnerotomachia* does not concern the recovery but the evanescence of knowledge.

The city does not appear because it is a place of ethical articulation, where dialogic contexts are co-ordinated.³³ Colonna's treatment of antique architecture makes it an object for sight and for sight's role in the inner senses—imagination, memory and the desire they arouse. Antiquity is remembered and fantastic; fantasy gives form to the remains recollected by Poliphilo so they can be envisaged. Conversely, these images must be stored in mnemonic loci so they can be recalled. Theatre as a destination for the parody pilgrimages of

31 On the architectural and pseudo-architectural descriptions, see Stefano Borsi, *Poliphilo architetto: Cultura architettonica e teoria artistica nell'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili di Francesco Colonna (1499)* (Rome: Officina, 1995). Howard and Snodin, *Onament*, 30, note that the first German translation of Vitruvius (Nuremberg, 1548) included illustrations from the *Hypnerotomachia*.

32 Bérolalde de Verville interpreted the *Hypnerotomachia* as an alchemical romance in a work of 1600; Kenny, *Palace of Secrets*, discusses Verville's minutely detailed descriptions of the hierarchy of decorative detail in buildings as a mode of allegorical fable concerning the possibility of encyclopaedic knowledge.

33 Even Filarete's treatise (composed c. 1461–4), with its fabulous elements, regards buildings as shaped by the civic institutions they house. On Alberti and Filarete, see Carroll W. Westfall, *Two Ideal Cities of the Early Renaissance: Republican and Ducal Thought in Quattrocento Treatises* (doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1967; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Dissertation Publishing, 1967).

triumph and perigesis is expunged of its civic role to become a place for seeing. The work presents antiquarianism as greed of the eyes illustrated by the erotic theme.³⁴

If the *Hypnerotomachia* is a revival of Apuleius or Lucian, one might ponder whether it presents antiquarianism, as much as allegorical fable, as matter for Lucianic mockery. It appears to parody the instructive capacity of fragmentary antiquities, as they become emblems for the unrequited lust of the narrator. Like the false paradises discussed above, it carries the mixture of sensuous appeal, fantasy and literary erudition associated with sophistic, but focuses on antiquarianism as object of fantastic illusions and memories.

The *Hypnerotomachia* offers a cautionary tale about the fragility and superficiality of reliance on spectacle as a mode of cultural design—especially in the absence of a dialogic element which could provide a reasoned basis. Despite the plethora of spectacles and ceremonies enacted in the loci (or *loca*) visited by Poliphilo, the work cannot be called dramatic since it does not display the whole which results from *mythos* and dialogue but a deceptive enactment of love's universal triumph. Triumph serves as a device which projects the illusory onto the 'real' and muddles the semantic possibilities of objects, signs and language.

Triumph: Mode and Temporality

The *Hypnerotomachia* raises the question of how the city as a totality of ethical spheres of action relates to the city as a topography of *memorie*, explored through word-image configurations from 'hieroglyphs' to spectacle. The triumph thematises questions of temporality alongside the act of display which makes images intelligible. The return celebrated in the ancient triumph was geographical, a return from a distant battlefield to the *urbs*. Return in Renaissance triumph is *temporal*; Flavio Biondo in *Roma triumphans* (1459) insists that the ground of triumph is Rome and the recovery of Rome triumphant is essential to the cultural renovation which befits her spiritual universality. The triumphal theme is also marked in Biondo's earlier *Roma instaurata* (1444–48) where spectacle, spectacle buildings and triumphal monuments dominate the urban topography. Virgil's association of the *magna mater* in tri-

34 See Liane Lefaivre, "Eros, Architecture and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*", *Design Book Review* 18 (1990), 17–20, on Poliphilo's descriptions of the "frenetic pleasure and cupidinous frenzy" or the "highest carnal pleasure" and "burning lust" which contemplation of antiquities induce in him.

umph with Roman imperium implies that the 'return' of antiquity will bring *varietas* and abundance. Things are recovered in time, but their renewed form carries altered significance; the triumph brings semantic transformation to the things shown. This concerns modality (showing as performance) and the emblematic potential of the displayed object.

Unlike the triumph as highest state honour in republican Rome, regulated by conditions and procedures, the triumph is used in the Renaissance in a flexible, associative way, becoming a mode, as much as a genre, of presentation.³⁵ This flexibility reflected the triumph's association in antiquity with other forms of spectacle, as we saw above: funeral, apotheosis, games and theatre, *adventus*. Much Renaissance triumphal spectacle calls for processions of gods and fabulous or mythological creatures in extravagant settings; the opulent settings and the allegorical parades suggest the Hellenistic pageants recounted in Athenaeus as much as Roman military victory. The classicizing elements of the *trionfo* also co-existed with popular spectacle.³⁶

The old Dionysian associations of triumph with nature's abundance gave a link to garden and villa topographies, which provide such flexible sites for the

35 On the mingling of festival, allegorical and 'antique' elements in Renaissance 'triumphal' spectacles, see Randolph Starn, Loren W. Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 157 ff.; Pinelli, "Feste e trionfi", 304–21; Carandente, *Trionfi*, 73. *Trionfo* was used for floats, stage machines, pageantry and songs performed at civic festivals from the thirteenth century, the regalia carried in Venetian processions by the doge and confectionary sculptures for banquets; see Starn and Partridge, *Arts*; Il Lasca (Antonfrancesco Grazzini), *Tutti i trionfi carri, mascherate o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo I, fino all'anno 1559* (Florence 1559); Pinelli, "Feste", 318, on the Florentine San Giovanni processions. Snodin and Howard, *Ornament*, 166–69, describe the nineteenth to early twentieth century triumphal arches erected in English towns from for royal or parliamentary visits; these were frequently made out of a single material associated with the town's industries—coal, salt, fishing gear or chairs. They continue the taxonomic tendency present in Renaissance triumphs.

36 For the popular character of Renaissance triumphs, see Pinelli, "Feste", 303–21. Triumphant Roman generals became *dramatis personae* of wedding festivities, like the triumph with Scipio, Caesar, Alexander and Fame in a "chariot of Fame" at the wedding of Camilla d'Aragona and Constanzo Sforza in Pesaro, 1475 (Carandente, *Trionfi*, 77, n. 170); the generals were preceded by a "chariot of Chastity". Il Lasca in *Tutti i trionfi* credited Lorenzo de' Medici with a classicising reform of Florentine carnival, with his triumphs of Bacchus and Ariadne and of Paullus Aemilius staged in 1491. Savonarola's *Triumphus crucis* (Florence: Bartolommeo di Libri, 1497) turned the theme back to Christianity and formed a basis for Titian's *Triumph of the Faith*; see Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, mostly iconographic* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 58–63.

dramatisation of the relationship with antiquity. The triumph as festive display of antiquities merges with the garden as place for their discovery and arrangement. The blending of triumph and poetry or theatre is a blending of settings; triumph can enter into the pleasaunces of lyric poetry as well as the *spectaculo urbano*. We see this in Propertius' generic play with epic and elegiac, as in Petrarch's *lauro*. The *Hypnerotomachia* with its triumphs of Bacchus restates in antiquarianism terms the Dionysian *thiasos* as a triumph.

Triumph proclaimed the celebratory character of the act of showing, which could be brought to various themes and degrees of permanence—antiquity recovered, meaningful arrangement or restitution of fragments, theophany or allegory, proclamation of fame. Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* (pre-1486–post-1492) provide a good instance.³⁷ They depict a plethora of antiquities—ensigns with their topographic images, inscriptions, vases, candelabra, arms, gear, musical instruments, dress, statues, civic emblems, cities personified as busts with *corona turrita*, chariots and architecture. These antiquities are shown being shown, as they are brought to the Capitol—and as they are returned from the Hadean darkness of time and neglect. Triumph also involves encyclopaedic or serial display of things of a certain kind or theme. This could reflect model book invention, as suggested by the candelabra series of the *Triumphs*, with its display of serial variation (see figure 8.7). It could also show a kind of topical invention apparent in other contemporary decorations supervised by Mantegna. From 1491–94 he supervised decorations in a series of chambers in the destroyed Gonzaga residence at Marmirolo, each dedicated

37 The paintings depict (1) *Ensign Bearers* (2) *The triumphal chariot with a statue and bearers of war machines, idols, shield and trophies* (3) *Bearers of trophies and precious silverware* (4) *Bearers of goldsmith work and precious vases; sacrificial bulls and trumpeters* (5) *Trumpeters bulls and elephants* (6) *Bearers of goldsmith work, trophies and coronets* (7) *Captives buffoons and an ensign bearer* (8) *Musicians and ensign bearers* (9) *Julius Caesar on his triumphal chariot*. They are painted on canvas, used in the late Quattrocento for festive objects such as standards or banners; their formerly brilliant colour is suggested by pre-1602 copies in Siena, painted on copper. Scenes not completed in the paintings, such as the parade of senators, exist in engravings. On Mantegna's sources, in particular Plutarch's *Paullus Aemilius* and Flavio Biondo's *Roma triumphans* (1459), see A.S. Halliday, "The Literary Sources of Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* ser. 3, 24, 1 (1994), 337–96; Andrew Martindale, *The Triumphs of Caesar by Andrea Mantegna in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court* (London: Harvey Miller, 1979); Charles Hope, "The Triumphs of Caesar" in *Andrea Mantegna*, exh. cat., ed. Jane Martineau (Milan: Electa, 1992), 350–92; Paola Tosetti Grandi, *I Trionfi di Cesare di Andrea Mantegna: Fonti Umanistiche e Cultura Antiquaria alla Corte dei Gonzaga* (Mantua: Sometti, 2008). See also Ronald Lightbown, *Mantegna. With a Complete Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Prints* (Oxford: Phaidon-Christie's, 1986), 140–53.



FIGURE 8.6 *School of Mantegna, engraving after Mantegna, Triumphs of Caesar, c. 1490. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1947. PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.*

to a certain theme—a “Room of Horses”, a “Room of the Map of the World”, a “Room of Cities” and a “Greek Room”, with images of Constantinople, its buildings and interiors.³⁸

In the *Triumphs of Caesar* the displayed artefacts provoke reflection on their communicative nature. They celebrate the artifice of the painter, as much as

³⁸ See Ettore Camesasca, *Mantegna* (Florence: Scala-Riverside, 1992), 59. Mantegna's son Francesco painted *Triumphs of Alexander* for Marmiolo from 1491.

the glory of the triumphant general.³⁹ Mantegna plays on various levels of meaning—signs such as ensigns or symbols of captured cities appear alongside objects which take on figurative significance within the triumph, like vases and candelabra.⁴⁰ Antiques become tokens, as well as instances, of antiquity recovered.⁴¹

Triumph as a mode of showing includes what can be called triumphal framing, encompassing revivals of the Roman arch as an architectural motif and the display of antiquarian fragments as an ornamental support in decorated rooms. Framing motifs include triumphal artefacts such as trophies which turn into candelabra and into the ubiquitous *grottesche*, discussed below. Exiguous painted architecture holds the conditions for mediation with the ‘history’ it frames, in the form of exemplars, signs, figures and inscriptions ‘inserted’ into the architecture like *emblemata* or ‘appended’ like trophies which show instruments and attributes.⁴² We shall enlarge on this argument in subsequent chapters. Lomazzo in *Trattato* VI.46 identified trophies with the instruments pertaining to a certain theme (e.g. hunting gear with Diana)—i.e. with the topical invention of ornament, and he warned against the abuse of this pervasive decorative mode.⁴³ From the time of Mantegna such triumphal framing

39 Stephen Campbell, “Mantegna’s Triumph: The Cultural Politics of Imitation ‘all’antica’ at the Court of Mantua 1490–1530”, in idem ed., *Artists at Court: Image-making and Identity 1300–1550* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004), 95ff. Campbell notes Mantegna’s use of Virgil’s poetic-imperial triumph in *Georgic* 3. Halliday, “Mantegna’s Triumphs”, 384, sees Mantegna’s interest in Republican triumphs as concerned with “the transition from Republic to Empire as legitimated in the context of the triumph”. Halliday reads this in terms of Gonzaga interest in imperial legitimation.

40 See Martindale, *Triumphs*, 170–77, on the “hieroglyphs” and inscriptions. Campbell, “Mantegna’s Triumph”, 91–105, argues for topicality of the inscriptions *GALLIA CAPTA* and *GALLIAM DEVICTAM* to Francesco Gonzaga’s capture of the French baggage train at the Battle of Fornovo in 1495, after which he was celebrated by the Ferrarese poet Ercole Strozzi as “*novo Cesare*”.

41 Campbell, “Vasari’s Renaissance”, in *Renaissance Theory*, 60, contrasts the “*pathos* of . . . displacement” whose objects bear “semiotic virtuosity” with the “levelling effects” of triumphal display, where all objects are interchangeable, reading the triumph as a figure for the “tension that besets the history of collecting in 1400s and 1500s”.

42 The association of ornament with *all’antica* embellishments and contextualizing decoration appears in Landino’s description of Masaccio as “*puro senza ornato*”; see Wohl, *Aesthetics*; Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 118–51.

43 Lomazzo, *Trattato* II, 349–51. See the tomb of Bregno (1506), attributed to Luigi Capponi in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome, where the monument to the sculptor (called “*Polycletus*”) is adorned with carving tools hanging from delicate threads and ribbons, and alternating with fruits. See Peter Rockwell, “*Tomba come Testamento: il Monumento*



FIGURE 8.7 *Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, active c. 1490–c. 1525, attrib., after Mantegna, Triumphs of Caesar. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Bequest of Phyllis Massar; 2011. PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.*

is scenographic, featuring perspectival ‘windows’ and illusionist architecture.⁴⁴ The ‘triumphal’ ornament of trophies and arch serves to illuminate praise, ‘making visible’ the fame which is portrayed through the arch configuration.

funerario di Andrea Bregno”, in *Andrea Bregno: Il senso della forma nella cultura artistica del Rinascimento*, ed. Claudio Crescentini and Claudio Strinati (Florence: Maschietto, 2008), 415–29; idem, “The Tomb of Andrea Bregno”, in *ibid.*, 431–39.

44 See Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, 92–94.

This 'illumination', to use the terminology of rhetorical ornament, works with the perspectival 'casement'.

Triumphal images appear in illustrations, drawings, prints, medals, at all levels of domestic decorations as well as in monumental schemes and civic ceremonies.⁴⁵ As epideictic pageant, the triumph could display the 'praises' of a person or topic showing *copia* and varied invention; as allegory, it could provide insights into relations, show analogies between worldly and transcendent 'virtue' and permit reflections on temporality. This is exemplified by Petrarch's *Triumph* and the illustrations they inspired.⁴⁶

We have seen the illustration of Cupid as idol. The standard illustrative scheme of the *Triumph* as a sequence of pageants shows certain triumphs (Death, Time, Eternity) through allegorical conventions which flatten the agonistic, pathetic character of the work and its iconographic surprises, like the sun as destroyer.⁴⁷ Chastity-Laura, the only historical exemplar in the series, often appears enthroned in profile, like an ancient general or an allusion to antique coins.⁴⁸ Fame (*gloria mundi*) is shown within a mandorla or as an

45 See the medal-like character of Piero della Francesca's austere portraits of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza (Uffizi), with triumphs of the civic and theological virtues on the reverse. By the mid fifteenth-century workshops like that of Apollonio di Giovanni and Marco del Buono produced numerous triumphs on *cassoni* and miniatures; see Carandente, *Il trionfo*, 50–51; D. Carnicelli's introduction to his edition of Lord Morley's *Tryumphes of Fraunces Petrarcke* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 38–46; Victor Masséna, Prince D'Essling and Eugène Müntz, *Pétrarque: ses études d'art, son influence sur les artistes, ses portraits et ceux de Laure, l'illustration de ses écrits* (Paris: Gazette des beaux-arts, 1902).

46 In *Triumphus Cupidinis* iv.165–66, Petrarch describes the procession as "like a long picture seen in a short space of time, where the foot moves forward and eye turns back", "quasi lunga pittura in tempo breve/ che 'l piè va inanzi, e l'occhio torna a dietro". Illustration of the *Triumph* starts shortly after Petrarch's death in 1374.

47 Death is shown as skeleton, Time as Saturn and Eternity often represented by the Trinity, although Bernard Salomon illustrated it by a tricephalic head (*I trionfi*, Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1547). On the illustrators' departure from Petrarch's text, see Panofsky, *Problems in Titian*, 60. Early commentaries, like that printed by Portilia (Parma 1473), by contrast dwell on the pathos of Laura's visit to Petrarch after death.

48 The *cassone* showing the triumphs of Love, Chastity and Death in the Victoria and Albert Museum attributed to the "Master of the *cassoni*" shows Chastity-Laura in the curved chariot used in Roman triumphs and shown in the Capitoline Marcus Aurelius relief. For the "giovinetta" as a general, and her relation to Scipio, see Richard Monti, "Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Ovid and Vergil", in *Petrarch's Triumphs*, 18–20. The Portilia commentary, 55v, notes that the triumph of chastity culminates in Pozzuoli, site of the temple of the Cumaean Sibyl and the villa of Scipio. The Jacopo del Sellaio *Triumph of Chastity* (Fiesole,

imago clipeata.⁴⁹ Where the mandorla in sacred images shows the 'darkness' that surrounds the godhead or an emanation of divine light, the *clipeus* of Fame in triumphal images often shows the earth, with rivers, trees and cities, encircled by ocean—the *ornatus mundi*.⁵⁰ In a Florentine *cassone* showing the *Triumph of Titus and Vespasian*, c. 1460, Fame in a mandorla with arms outstretched appears like a saint or Madonna della Misericordia above the city gates: Rome is the locus of Fame.⁵¹

A series of *Triumphs of Petrarch* supposedly hung alongside Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* in a temporary theatre erected in the Corte Vecchia, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua for the Carnival of 1501 and described by Sigismondo Cantelmo.⁵² Cantelmo describes the *Triumph* canvases displayed along one wall of a room with colonnades which suggested an antique building.⁵³ At one end was the "prospecto" where the actors performed; other decorations included coats of arms, *insegne*, *imprese*, whole or fragmented gilded or silvered statues

Museo Bandini) has Chastity-Laura in a purple gown adorned with gold, like the ancient *toga picta*; the surrounding virgins wear costumes and garlands which mix nymph and triumph allusions.

- 49 Fame is named as *Gloria mundi* in the *Triumph of Fame* of Apollonio di Giovanni (Vatican Library, Cod. Urb. Lat. 683). For images of Gloria in early manuscripts of the *Triumphs* and *De viris illustribus*, and on the influence of Boccaccio's triumph of Glory in *Amorosa visione* 6, see Carandente, *Trionfi*, 24; Pinelli, "Feste", 297–9; D. Shorr, "Some notes on the Iconography of Petrarch's Triumph of Fame", *Art Bulletin* 20 (1938), 102–7. Later *Triumphs* illustrations in the editions of Bevilacqua (Venice, 1568) and Giolito (Venice, 1558) show winged Fame with a trumpet.
- 50 For depictions of the world on the mandorla or *clipeus* of Fame, see the *Triumphs* of Francesco Pesellino (Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum) where Fame is seated in the posture of a Madonna della Misericordia; Apollonio di Giovanni, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 1129; Marco del Buono attrib., *Triumph of Fame* (Siena, Pinacoteca).
- 51 Illustrated in Carandente, *Trionfi*, 21.
- 52 Cantelmo, letter of 1501 to Ercole D'Este, printed in Alessandros D'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano* (1891, repr. Rome: Bardi, 1966), II, 381–83; discussed in Kristeller, *Mantegna* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), 283–85. The plays performed in this setting were Roman New Comedy and *Hippolytus*—D'Ancona suggests the Senecan version. Documents of 1497 and 1507 mention the use of the *Triumphs* in temporary theatres; see Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 149–50. The *Triumphs of Petrarch* are otherwise unknown and may have been the *Triumphs of Alexander*, produced by Francesco Mantegna (see n.38). See Martindale, *The Triumphs*, 33, on uncertainty over other *trionfi* paintings used in Gonzaga spectacles. The *Trionfi del Petrarca* ascribed to Niccolò da Verona (Kress Foundation), have been suggested as modelled on Mantegna's purported Petrarchan triumphs. Similar to these paintings are a set of ivory reliefs in Graz Cathedral.
- 53 D'Ancona, *Origini*, 382.

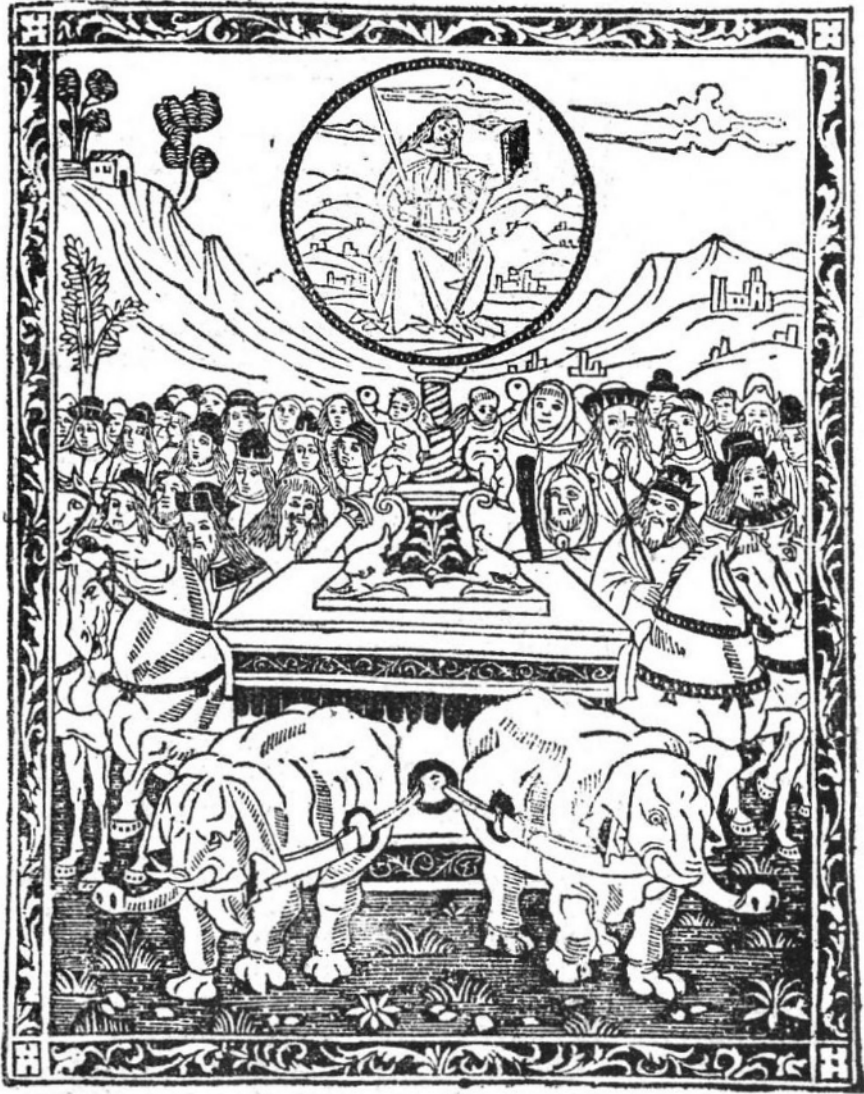


FIGURE 8.8 Triumph of Fame, from Petrarch, *Triumphs* (Genua and Strizzi, Rome, 1499).

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA.

and cosmic iconography—four columns, each supporting a wind, a grotto and the sky shining with the heavenly bodies which moved in their proper houses.⁵⁴

54 The “prospecto” was a recess decorated with greenery and hung with golden cloth. As in Mantegna’s *Camera picta*, the drapery was pulled back to “discover” the scenes on the north and west walls and covered the remaining walls.

Within this celestial *macchina* was the wheel of fortune, containing a golden image of Fortune, who acts a link between the cosmic temporality and the history shown in Mantegna's paintings.⁵⁵ The decorations of this "temporaneo teatro" contain the elements which often reappear in the perspectival room and which we noted at Palazzo Schifanoia: figuration of cosmic conditions is the context for the celebration of historical significance.

Mario Equicola described Mantegna's *Triumphs* in their subsequent suburban location, Palazzo San Sebastiano, in 1521, saying that they seemed "maimed" without the procession and spectators which should accompany a triumph.⁵⁶ Equicola refers to the lack of painted spectators but there is the implication that the paintings required an occasion which reflected their own content in order to be realised—as well as the cosmic 'frame' described in Cantelmo's letter.

Recovering Rome

Petrarch provides early discussion of a theme pertinent to the Renaissance triumph—the meditation on Rome as the locus of *memorie* in the senses of memory, physical remains and their representation. Petrarch's letter of 1341 to Giovanni Colonna (*Fam.* VI.2), describes a walk through the city, recalling the mythic and historic events which took place in its loci and contemplating the ruins from the roof of the Baths of Diocletian. Wandering in the city as *peripateia* leads to discussion of the philosophical schools and Petrarch's declaration of his eclecticism, his preference of truth to a school. The letter laments the loss of Rome, less known there than in any other place, while stressing the situated, particular nature of meaning and local memory.⁵⁷ Rome is universal and locale, *memoria* and exemplar of oblivion.

55 The *grocta*, which Cantelmo praised for its natural appearance, recalls the 1490 "Festa del Paradiso" staged by Leonardo at Castello Sforzesco for the wedding of Gian Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella d'Aragona, which depicted the heavens with the stars and planets shining within a grotto-like enclosure; see Zorzi, *Teatro e la città*, 167.

56 Quoted in Martindale, *Triumphs*, 185, document 26, "parea dicto triumpho trunco et mutilato per non essere quella pompa che sequir solea il triumphante". Hope, "Triumphs of Caesar", 351, details preparations for their display in Palazzo San Sebastiano, where they were installed by 1512; see Carla Cerati, *I Trionfi di Cesare di Andrea Mantegna e il Palazzo di S. Sebastiano in Mantova* (Mantua: Casa del Mantegna, 1989) on their theatrical uses there. The *Triumph* canvases returned in the Galleria della Mostra in the Palazzo Ducale by 1627, until their purchase by Charles I in 1629.

57 Motta, *Castiglione*, 357, quotes Giano Vitale Panormitano's epigram on Rome conquered by its own decay ("Qui Romam in media quaeris novus advena Roma").

Petrarch's letter, like Cicero's *De finibus*, reflects on the associative nature of place. Later accounts of Roman *perigesis*, such as Manuel Chrysoloras' letter *On the Old and New Rome* (1411) emphasises triumphal remains and their temporal significance. Chrysoloras cites the fourth century sophist Libanius in saying that Rome is not of earth, but part of heaven, but he also notes that cities, like men, die.⁵⁸ Libanius is cited also by Poggio Bracciolini in his description of the Roman ruins in Book 1 of *De varietate fortunae* (c. 1430–45), with its attentive account of epigraphy and descriptions of triumphal arches, spectacle buildings and tombs.⁵⁹ For Poggio, contemplation of ruined monuments provokes awe at the deplorable variety of fortune and the spectacle of Rome ruined provokes sorrow and pleasure; Rome without her "ornaments" is like a corpse, yet is also the greatest view in the world.⁶⁰ Poggio rehearses the old Cynic or Lucianic theatre topos, when he says Fortune treats men like actors and takes the exemplary Roman ruins as a panorama for surveying her work. The ruins are scene and witness of the "theatre of Fortune".⁶¹

Chrysoloras' letter ends with wandering in the old triumphal ways, imagining an ancient triumph, its sights, sounds and emotions.⁶² All this is now dust, victor and vanquished are now equal and their monuments lie covered by earth or mud or bushes, ground for lime or put to menial uses.⁶³ These remains signify preservation as well as loss, as Chrysoloras remarks on the exhaustive detail in historiated columns and triumphal arches, comparing it favourably

58 Libanius, letter to Jovian, *Opera* (Leipzig: Tübner, 1903–23), x, 425; Chrysoloras *Rome*, 1.2, 3.1. See Niutta, *Le Due Rome*, 13, on the dedicatee as emperor Manuel II Paleologus. Libanius' description of Antioch was a source for encomiastic descriptions of cities. On the death of cities cf. Lucian, *Charon* 23. For Chrysoloras, *Rome* 4.3, Constantinople is superior to Rome as it has a model (*archetypos* and *paradeigma*). He compares the two cities to a mother and daughter where the latter outshines her mother in beauty. The simile could be compared to the father-son topos for imitation.

59 Poggio Bracciolini, *Historiae de varietate fortunae* 1, in Poggii Bracciolini *Florentini Historiae de Varietate Fortunae libri quattuor ex ms. Codice Bibliothecae Ottobonianae nunc primum editi et notis illustrati a Dominico Georgio* (Paris: Coustelier, 1723, repr. Bologna: Forni, 1969). Libanius is cited at *ibid.*, 6. Book 1 contains a list of epigraphs and remains, topographically located.

60 "admirantes animo, tum ob veterem collapsorum aedificiorum magnitudinem et vastas urbis antiquae ruinas, tum obtanti imperii ingentem stragem, stupendam profecto ac deplorandam fortunae varietatem", *ibid.*, 5; on Rome as corpse, see *ibid.*, 1–2.

61 *Ibid.*,

62 PG 156, col. 51.

63 *Ibid.*

with the narratives of historians like Herodotus.⁶⁴ The carvings are not just records; they seem to live and transport the viewer into a direct vision of the past, as art vies with nature to show men, not their images, present before his eyes.⁶⁵ The carvings exemplify Chrysoloras' fascination with the artificial representation of life which makes him prize images of creatures as more beautiful and vivid than creatures themselves.

Triumphal remains provoke reflection on time and show the past as a pageant of figures which 'live' through artifice. The Renaissance triumph involves meditation on the relation between memory (or *memorie*) and fantasy. This appears in Biondo's *Roma triumphans*, the first in a series of Quattrocento archaeological studies of the Roman triumph, such as *De re militari* (1472) of Roberto Valturio, or the lost *De dignitatibus romanorum triumphoque et rebus bellicis* of Giovanni Marcanova.⁶⁶ *Roma triumphans* was part of a sequence of works on Rome, alongside Biondo's studies of monuments (*De Roma instaurata* and topography (*Italia illustrata* 1448–58, printed 1474). It constituted a history of Roman civilisation in its various aspects (religion, institutions, customs, military matters, buildings), culminating in the triumph.

As a ceremony which can be revived, the triumph forms the link between the antique past and its restoration. The work concludes with a reproduction of a Roman triumph which can be performed, synthesised from the detail of various descriptions. Biondo identifies the triumph totally with Rome and claims to provide an image of Rome "flourishing and triumphant, as Augustine desired to see it".⁶⁷ Triumph as representation of the universal Roman *imperium* which made various peoples into one *civitas* is an ancient theme; more surprising is the name of Augustine, whom we might associate with the disjunction of earthly and heavenly cities. Biondo recounts Augustine's sorrow that he was never able to see a triumph and claims that Orosius described triumphs at Augustine's request.⁶⁸ When Biondo says he will describe the most spectacular triumphs of antiquity as though they were before him, he imagines Augustine beside him. As with Petrarch, the renovation of antique culture

64 Discussed in Smith, *Architecture*, 133–76; Baxandall, "Guarino"; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 239.

65 Chrysoloras uses *autopsia* and *parousia* to designate the actuality of the sculptures, PG 156, col. 28. See Barkan, *Unearthing*, 130–31.

66 See Chapter 10 on Marcanova's epigraphic sylloge.

67 "Urbem Romam florentem ac qualem Beatus Aurelius Augustinus triumphantem videre desideravit", *De Roma triumphante libri decem* (Venice: Philippus Paulus Mantuanus, 1511), A6v. Biondo insists on Rome as the sole locus of the triumph (*ibid.*, 126r).

68 *Ibid.*

involves 'conversations' with Augustine (as in the *Secretum*) and the revival of the Roman triumph. Biondo proclaims continuity with antiquity while staging a return of the past which will permit conversation with the dead, as Ciriaco d'Ancona said.

For Biondo, the triumph exemplifies the continuity between the Roman and Christian *imperium*.⁶⁹ Thus the recovery of antiquity and the restoration of the dignity of the church go together, as he praises Pius II for the eloquence which is worthy of the papacy and of Rome, drawing parallels between ancient triumphs and the expectation of a crusade.⁷⁰ Biondo ends *Roma triumphans* with a description of the *via triumphalis* which, he claims erroneously, started from the Vatican area, where the Vatican obelisk stood.⁷¹

Biondo's concluding synthetic triumph, for use by contemporary victors, draws on the triumph of Titus and Vespasian and the bringing of sacred ornaments and the Law ("nobilissimum spoliolum") from the Temple of Jerusalem as recounted in Josephus, *Jewish War* VII.123–162.⁷² Biondo describes this as the most spectacular of triumphs in language which suggests the attainment of universal *copia* and *varietas*.⁷³ In his 1543 Tuscan translation of Biondo, Lucio

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- 69 Onofrio Panvinio's *Fastorum libri v* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1558), with its influential illustration of a triumph, similarly stressed the continuity of the triumphal tradition, as inherited by the church and the Holy Roman Empire. On Panvinio's assertions of continuity versus Bartolomeo Marliani's critique (*Romanorum virorum Triumphum cum Commentario*, 1560) which limited the triumph to antique ceremony, see Starn and Partridge, *Arts of Power*, 159–60. Panvinio also wrote a *Comentario dell' uso et ordine de trionfi antichi* (Venice: Tramezzino, 1571).
- 70 Biondo, *Roma triumphans*, A6r–A6v. Biondo describes Pius as the first pope since Leo I and Leo II to possess the appropriate level of eloquence. Like Valla in the *Elegantiae*, Biondo discusses the unity which Rome brought through Latin "per latinae linguae communionem".
- 71 Biondo, *ibid.*, 130r, locates the "territorium triumphale" in the site of the Rotonda of Sant'Andrea or Santa Maria della febbre, an ancient church adjacent to the south wall of Old St Peter's, and incorporated into the new basilica; the Vatican obelisk stood nearby. Biondo believed that Santa Maria della febbre and the adjoining Santa Petronilla were formerly a Temple of Apollo. Biondo notes that the *imperatores* had to wait in the Vatican area, outside the city, before they entered in triumph (*ibid.*, 125v).
- 72 Josephus uses *theōria* for the triumph of Titus and Vespasian rather than the more usual *theama*.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 129r–129v, 131r. The parade contained exotic animals, a multitude of gold, silver, ivory, luxurious textiles ("varietas arte babylonica"), theatre machines (*pegmata*), whose scenes of the horrors of war are called "magnificent" and "lively" and seemed to "rain down" ("omnia fluere") all conceivable species and artefacts: "quae quisque excogitaverit vel artium factis vel divinitarum operibus, vel naturae novitate" (129r). In his summary of

Fauno declares: "in each triumph, everyone sought to vary and always to present new things".⁷⁴ While Biondo follows Josephus closely, he changes the triumphal route from the Porta triumphalis to the Vatican to demonstrate the continuity with papal ceremonial.⁷⁵ Ancient accounts of triumphs end with the consecration of the *spolia* which then become the adornment of a temple. Josephus' account of the triumph of Titus and Vespasian finishes with reference to the Templum Pacis as a kind of museum where art treasures previously scattered through the empire are gathered together.⁷⁶

Biondo's Roman triumph is a work of and about imaginary recreation, as he speaks of representing absent ancient things to Augustine, an absent ancient spectator. This emphasis on interior reflection contrasts with pragmatic Roman descriptions of spoils and captives, like those of Livy.⁷⁷ Biondo's imaginary triumphal spectacle shows temporal reflection, inner vision and anachronism as a mode of recovering the ground of antiquity.⁷⁸

The renovation of the Roman triumph augured by Biondo does take place but as a means of displaying antiquities and utilizing them for political ends. The relocation of antiquities by Paul II and Sixtus IV to private or communal

the antique triumph, Biondo returns to the sumptuous fabrics, the *pegmata* and Josephus' praise of the triumph (ibid., 130r–31r).

- 74 "in ogni triumpho, ciascuno cercasse di variare e di recarvi sempre cose nuove", *Roma tri-
onfante* (Venice: Tramezzino, 1543), 376r. Biondo simply notes that things changed (*muta-
bant*) in triumphal spectacles. For distinction between Biondo and Fauno see Fabrizio
Cruciani, *Il teatro nel Rinascimento: Roma 1450–1550* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1983), 90.
- 75 Biondo, *Roma triumphans*, 131r. Biondo omits Orosius' interpretation of Titus and
Vespasian as an allegory of the Father and Son of the Trinity, in triumph over the Jews who
had worked against the divine plan (Orosius VII.9.8). Biondo's reconstructed triumphal
route traverses the Ghetto.
- 76 Josephus, *Jewish War* VII.158–62. The Law and the purple hangings of the sanctuary of
the Temple were placed however in the palace. On the Templum Pacis as a museum for
Greek masterpieces, such as the *Nile* and the *Cow* of Myron, and for the spoils of Flavian
War (shown in the Arch of Titus), see Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*, 181, 187. The Temple had
a forum in front, planted like a formal garden.
- 77 See Livy XLV.39 on the need to display booty so that it does not seem stolen and fur-
tively brought to the treasury; the passage transforms spoils from depredations to a rite of
Roman ownership.
- 78 Pinelli, "Feste", 309–11, notes that Biondo's bizarre account of the *pegmata* with a central
'tree' from which hung leather 'nests' that cradled babbling infants, derives from floats for
Florentine San Giovanni parades, described by Vasari in his life of Il Cecca (Biondo, *Roma
triumphans* 131r; Vasari, *Vite* III, 450–53). Fauno links Biondo's *pegmata* with the Festa di
San Giovanni. Biondo follows Josephus (*Jewish War*, VII.50, 139–47) in description of other
pegmata which showed scenes (*simulachra*) of battle.

settings heightened questions of the ownership and meaning of recovered antiquities.⁷⁹ Collectors like the Roman Della Valle family used temporary triumphal arches, set up for the papal *posse*, to display their collections.⁸⁰ The new ‘captives’ exhibited were prized statues, especially the *Cleopatra* (*Ariadne*), displayed in a triumph by Paul II in 1466, and celebrated as being as loved by Julius II as Julius Caesar had loved the historical Cleopatra.⁸¹ The use of antique sculptures in renovated or newly created Roman spectacle grounds is well-documented in the papacies of Julius II and Leo X, in the use of Piazza Navona (the “Agonale”) for Carnival triumphs, in the refashioning of the Belvedere statue court and in the ephemeral theatre created on the Capitol in 1513.⁸² Notturmo Napolitano termed his account of the 1513 festivities “tre triumphi”,

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- 79 On Sixtus IV's ‘gift’ of the *Lupa* and the colossal hand to the Capitol, see Kathleen Christian, *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527* (New Haven: Yale, 2010), 103–19; Angela Marino, “Idoli e colossi: la statuaria antica sulla piazza del Campidoglio da Sisto IV a Leone X”, in *Roma centro ideale*, 237–47.
- 80 For the display of the Della Valle collection on a temporary triumphal arch, see Christian, “*Instauratio and Pietas*. The Della Valle collections of ancient Sculpture”, in *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Penny and Eike Schmidt, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2008), 40, 58, n. 46 and bibliography; Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura*, 65. Giovanni Giacomo Penni describes the Della Valle arch in a 1513 letter on Leo X's *posse*; see Phyllis Pray Bober, *Drawings After the Antique by Amico Aspertini: Sketchbooks in the British Museum* (London: Warburg Institute, 1957), 48; Cruciani, *Teatro*, 401–2. Cardinal Riario ordered an ephemeral arch modelled on the Arch of Constantine for the coronation of Julius II in 1503.
- 81 On statues of the gods as “captives” in Christian triumphs, see Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III.54.1–2; 4–7. For Paul II's triumph of Augustus over Cleopatra, see M. Camesius de Viterbo, *Vita Pauli secundi* in Muratori, *Rerum italicarum scriptores* (1734, repr. Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 1983), III.2, 1018–1019. The procession featured Cupid, Diana with a troupe of nymphs, Mars, Bacchus, fauns and youths apparelled like an ancient army. *Cleopatra* was bought from the Maffei by Julius II in 1512 and placed in the Belvedere; his love for her is described in an epigram attributed to Evangelista Maddaleni Fausto di Capodiferro: “QUANTUM ME, VIVAM, CAESAR MUNDI ARBITER, ARSIT/MARMOREAM TANTUM IULIUS ALTER AMAT”; “As Caesar, ruler of the world, burned for me when I lived, now that I am of marble another Julius loves me”. The epigram appeared with *Huius nymphae loci* epigram of Campano (discussed below) on the fountain where *Cleopatra* was installed; see Hans Henrik Brummer, *The Statue Court in the Vatican Belvedere* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1970), 221. Julius II had coins minted in 1506 in which he celebrated himself as the new Julius Caesar; for caricature of his triumphalism, see Erasmus, *Julius exclusus* (1517).
- 82 The “Agonale” was used repeatedly for triumphal parades, like the triumph of Caesar celebrated by Cesare Borgia in 1500; see Carandente, *Trionfi*, 80; Pinelli, “Feste”, 330; Cruciani, *Teatro*, 406–34; Linda Pellicchia, “The Contested City: Urban Form in Sixteenth Century

comprising descriptions of the façade and interior of the theatre, the banquet staged and the triumphal pageant, with eclogues and orations.⁸³

Gombrich suggests the influence of the *Hypnerotomachia* on Bramante's work at the Vatican.⁸⁴ In the 1513 Carnival of Julius II, a chariot dedicated to him with obelisk, hieroglyphs and rebuses derived mainly from the *Hypnerotomachia* and Horapollo appeared alongside *tychē* personifications of defeated cities (e.g. Bologna), and a chariot of Apollo, with a replica of the *Apollo Belvedere* shooting arrows to show victory.⁸⁵ Epigrammatic word-image play is a means to articulate various contextual meanings for objects and relate them.

The city recovered as triumphal topography, as Biondo wished, is a city which relies on the confusion of theatre with public space and on the role of poetry in prompting allusions. This appears already in Alberti, as the correspondence between public and private buildings involves the penetration of spaces for spectacle, display or recreation in the latter. Prisciani describes spectacle buildings and public spaces as a continuum of *spectacula*; this is depicted in the Palazzo Schifanoia frescoes, which also show the role of triumph in conflating the allegorical, the theatrical and the civic.

This leads to the interest in architectural forms, monumental or ephemeral, which could accommodate a continuum of spectacular activities, from the playful to the solemn. Members of Pomponio Leto's Roman academy were central to attempts to recreate ancient theatre through antiquarian ceremonies like the *Palilia* (the celebration of Rome's birthday) and staging of comedies

Rome" in *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael*, ed. Marcia Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 59–94.

83 See Cruciani, *Il teatro nel Rinascimento, Roma 1450–1550*, 421–423.

84 Gombrich, "Hypnerotomachiana", *JWCI*, 14.1/2 (1951), 119–125, repr. in *Symbolic Images*, 104–8, linked the *Cleopatra* installation, which recalled the Venus fountain of the *Hypnerotomachia*, with Bramante's project to carve a hieroglyphic inscription along the wall of the Belvedere Court and his purported plan of turning the axis of St Peter's from east-west to south-north so that the Vatican obelisk (whose sphere supposedly contained the ashes of Julius Caesar) would stand in a forecourt before the church. This would have given the progression temple-obelisk-palace-theatre ground-circular exedra-garden, which bears some resemblance to the sequence of spaces in the *Hypnerotomachia*, starting with a temple and obelisk in a forecourt, and ending in an amphitheatre and garden.

85 For description, see Battista Stabellini, letter of 20 February 1513 to Isabella D'Este, in Cruciani, *Teatro*, 369–72. The topographic personifications alternated with pageants of the trades. The obelisk was inscribed with Latin, Greek and Hebrew epigraphs. The 'hieroglyphic' rebus featured wheat ears, an ape, an oak, a sparrow, a palm, an eye and a stork.

of Plautus and Terence in “atriis pro theatro usus”.⁸⁶ Sulpizio da Veroli in his Vitruvius edition (1486) exhorts Cardinal Riario to renew Rome through the building of a theatre and praises him as protector of the Pomponiani and organiser of their performance of Seneca’s *Hippolytus*, directed by Sulpizio and performed in April 1486, probably for the *Palilia*, when the *Epidicum* of Plautus was performed on the Capitol.⁸⁷

The elasticity of spectacle buildings is illustrated by the theatre constructed to house the 1513 Capitol festivities when Roman citizenship was conferred on Lorenzo and Giuliano de’ Medici. The theatre, attributed to Pietro Rosselli, a collaborator of Giuliano da Sangallo, accommodated a mass, oration, banquet, triumph and a performance of Plautus’ *Poenulus*.⁸⁸ The plan recalls the Laurentian theatre courts designed for the Palace of the King of Naples, for Poggio Reale and for the gigantic Medici villa projected for Via Laura, Florence, which would have engulfed streets in its monumental approach.⁸⁹ In each case

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- 86 See Marcantonio Sabellio’s life of Leto; Phyllis Pray Bober, “The Legacy of Pomponius Laetus”, 455–64; *Pomponio Leto tra identità locale e cultura internazionale: atti del convegno internazionale (Teggiano, 3–5 ottobre 2008)*, ed. Anna Modigliani, Patricia Osmond, Marianne Pade, Johann Ramming (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 2011); Cruciani, *Teatro*, 184–88, 219–27; Grafton and Jardine, *Humanism*, 83–92; Repertorium Pomponianum, <http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it>, retrieved 13 April 2012.
- 87 See Alessandro Cortese, letter to Francesco Baroni of April 1486, in Cruciani, *Teatro*, 225. Seneca’s *Hippolytus* was staged before Riario’s palace in Campo de’ Fiori and in the Casa Riario, with Tommaso ‘Fedra’ Inghirami as Phaedra. Inghirami also performed the role of Phaedrus in Sadoletto’s dialogue *Phaedrus*, performed in the villa of Jacopo Galli (where Michelangelo’s pseudo-antique *Bacchus* was displayed) in which ‘Phaedrus’ argues for the superiority of rhetoric over philosophy; see Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 177–187.
- 88 See Arnaldo Bruschi’s reconstruction of the theatre in Cruciani, *Il teatro del Campidoglio e le feste romane del 1513* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1968), 141–62; Bruschi, “Il Teatro capitolino del 1513”, *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studio di Architettura Andrea Palladio* 16 (1974), 189–218. The Codex Coner, 16r, contains a plan for the theatre. Contemporary accounts described the liveliness of the paintings, the theatricals, and the banquet where diners seated in the *scena* were watched by the audience in the *cavea*; as the diners threw their food around, the *Narratione* of Paolo Palliolo recounts with delight how fowls, swine and game flew through the air. For Palliolo’s *Narratione* see Cruciani, *Campidoglio*, 21–67; see idem, *Teatro*, 406–34, for other descriptions.
- 89 Bruschi, “Il teatro capitolino”, 200, underlining the triumphal character of the architecture. The designs for the Palace of the King of Naples (Codex Barberini, Barb. Lat. 4424, fol. 39v, 1488) and the Via Laura palace (Uffizi, U 282Ar, c. 1515) are attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo; in Poggio Reale (c. 1485), attributed to Giuliano da Maiano by Vasari, the fourth side of the court framed an idyllic prospect of Vesuvius. Serlio, *Terzo Libro* 121r–122r, provides a plan, elevation and section of Poggio Reale, the last Italian building discussed in the book. See Stefano Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo: i disegni di architettura e dell’antico*

the court had a sunken centre, surrounded on all sides by steps like a cavea; the courts were not purpose-built theatres, but permitted associations between various spectacle uses. Still more ambitious than the Via Laura scheme was the 1513 plan, drawn by Giuliano da Sangallo, for a Roman Medici quarter stretching from the Pantheon to Via Ripetta, dominated by a giant palace which would have overshadowed Piazza Navona.⁹⁰

These noted cases illustrate the ambiguities created by buildings housing spectacles, with civic spaces turned into ceremonial fields for a ruling family.⁹¹ The flexibility of the arch was central to the exploitation of such ambiguities, as freestanding monument, as extended into arcade or exedra, and used to articulate and enclose axial topographies.⁹² Ghirlandaio's *Presentation at the Temple* in the Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, which shows a giant arcaded courtyard or piazza behind the temple, suggests the aspect of such ambiguous spaces and foreshadows the Belvedere Court in appearance.⁹³ Ancient complexes which extended over topographies and conflated allusions to city, villa, temple and spectacle building, like the Domus Aurea, the Temple of Fortune at Palestrina, Pliny's villa and the Theatre of Pompey were valuable points of reference.⁹⁴ The latter contained temple, theatre, forum and galleries for the display of Pompey's triumphal *spolia*.⁹⁵ Such blurring appears in Bramante's design for the Belvedere court as an enclosed hillside topography,

(Rome: Officina, 1985), 395–404, 441–53; Manfredo Tafuri in Christoph Frommel, Stefano Ray, Manfredo Tafuri, *Raffaello architetto* (Milan: Electa, 1984), 76–90; Caroline Elam, "Lorenzo de' Medici and the urban development of Renaissance Florence", *Art History*, 1 (1978), 43–66; Linda Pellecchia, "Reconstructing the Greek house: G. da Sangallo's villa for the Medici in Florence", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 52 (1993), 323–337. Elam suggests a tentative date of 1491 for the Via Laura project, redrawn after 1512.

90 Giuliano Da Sangallo, Uffizi A 7949; see Westfall, "Purpose and Form", 328–29; *Raffaello architetto*, 77–90. The rendering of a public space as a huge court also corresponds to Medici projects for the San Lorenzo quarter.

91 Pellecchia "Reconstructing", 324, notes the "truly exceptional" appropriation of the city streets by the Via Laura villa: "had it been built, the villa would have transformed—in almost Neronian fashion—a section of the city into a private estate for the Medici".

92 On the arch as axial marker, see Alberti, *De re aed.* VIII.6.

93 Jean Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Artist and Artisan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 84–85, suggests the influence of Giuliano da Sangallo on Ghirlandaio's architectural depictions.

94 Tacitus xv.42 described the Domus Aurea as enclosing a landscape.

95 On the Theatre of Pompey, see Temelini, "Pompey's Politics". At the summit of the steps of the cavea of Pompey's theatre was a temple of Venus Victrix, Pompey's protector. Pompey defended the theatre against the ban on permanent theatres by saying that it was an entry stair to the Sanctuary of Venus (Gellius, *Attic Nights* x.1.7). Plutarch, *Pompey* 42.4, said

which carried triumphal allusions in the arch form of its central nymphaeum and its arcades and echoed a temple and theatre at the top level of the court.⁹⁶ The ancient spectacle topography of the Vatican, associated with the circus of Nero and the site of a naumachia, is evoked in Perino del Vaga's 1545–47 fresco in Castel Sant'Angelo of the Belvedere Court as a naumachia. The lower court hosted races, tournaments, *sbarre* or naumachia, while “eclogues” and songs were performed during banquets in the Belvedere, similar to contemporary entertainments in Chigi's *villa suburbana*, the Farnesina.⁹⁷

In the Carnivals of Julius II or Leo X, or the 1513 festivities on the Capitol, we see a number of elements interwoven.⁹⁸ Ancient spectacle sites are ‘renewed’ by the triumphal display of statues or copies from papal collections, like the copy of the *Apollo Belvedere* displayed in Julius' 1513 Carnival or the *Dea natura* exhibited in the “Festa di Agone” in 1520.⁹⁹ These exhibitions linked the civic

that Pompey had a model and plan of the theatre of Mytilene made, where the poets celebrated his deeds.

- 96 James Ackerman, *The Cortile del Belvedere* (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1954), 131–38, discusses the Domus Aurea with its *porticus triplices*, Pliny's Tuscan villa, Hadrian's Villa, the Palatine Hippodrome, the Horti Sallustiani and the Horti Acilorum as models for the Belvedere. The triumphal arch articulation appears in Serlio's illustration, *Terzo Libro*, 117v, which shows the arches of the upper court flanked by twin pilasters and niches; on triumphal arch and the arch framed by an order in theatre buildings see Bruschi, “Il teatro capitolino”, 199. For Bramante's development of the nymphaeum, at Genazzano, see n.162 below.
- 97 On the Belvedere as spectacle ground, see Ackerman, *Belvedere*; on the entertainments staged there and in the Farnesina, see Cruciani, *Teatro*, 341–64.
- 98 On the Leonine festivities, see Bonner Mitchell, *Italian Civic Pageantry in the High Renaissance. A Descriptive Bibliography of Triumphal Entries and Selected other Festivals for State Occasions* (Florence: Olschki, 1979), 119–24; Bruschi, “Da Bramante a Peruzzi: spazio e pittura”, in Marcello Fagiolo and Maria L. Madonna eds. *Baldassare Peruzzi. Pittura, scena e architettura* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1987), 321–23; Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura*, 61–79. The theme of the Capitol spectacle, the union of Florence and Rome, reappears in Leo's 1515 Florentine entry, which saw it ‘transformed’ into Rome, with *apparati* designed by Granacci, Andrea del Sarto and Rosso amongst others; see Vasari's *Life* of Andrea del Sarto; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 282, n. 36 for Granacci's triumphal inventions. The Leonine frescoes by Andrea del Sarto and Franciabigio in the Salone of Poggio a Caiano, in honour of Lorenzo de' Medici, show two invented scenes which mix allusion to Medici *gesta* with the Egyptian imagery of Roman triumphs: *The Tribute of Egypt to Caesar* and the *Triumph of Cicero*, which features an obelisk. See Julian Kliemann, *Gesta dipinte: La grande decorazione nelle dimore italiane dal Quattrocento al Seicento* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1993), 35–36.
- 99 On the *Dea natura* statue, see Christian, “The De' Rossi collection of Ancient Sculptures, Leo X, and Raphael”, *JWCI* 65 (2002), 154–58; Cruciani, *Teatro*, 489, quoting Angelo

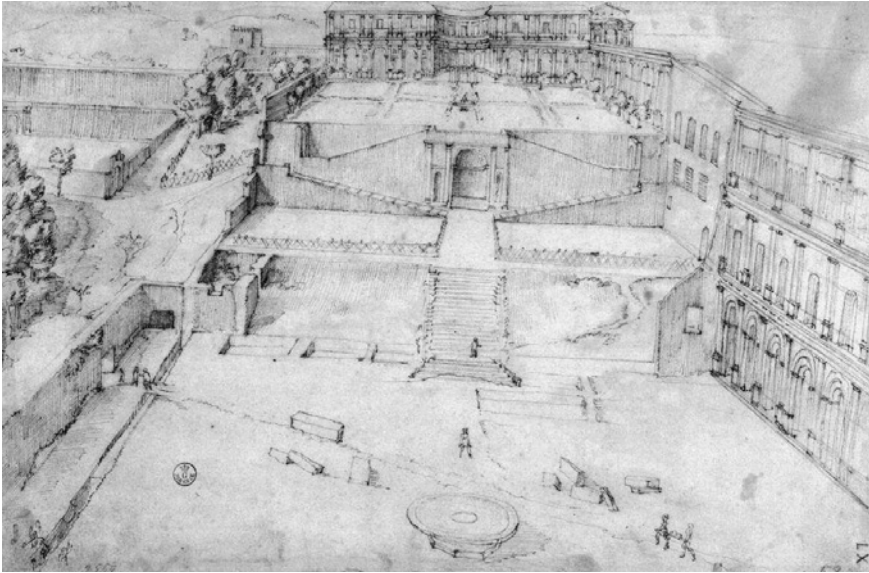


FIGURE 8.9 *Giovanni Antonio Dosio, View of Belvedere Court, c. 1558–61. Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, A 2559.*

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

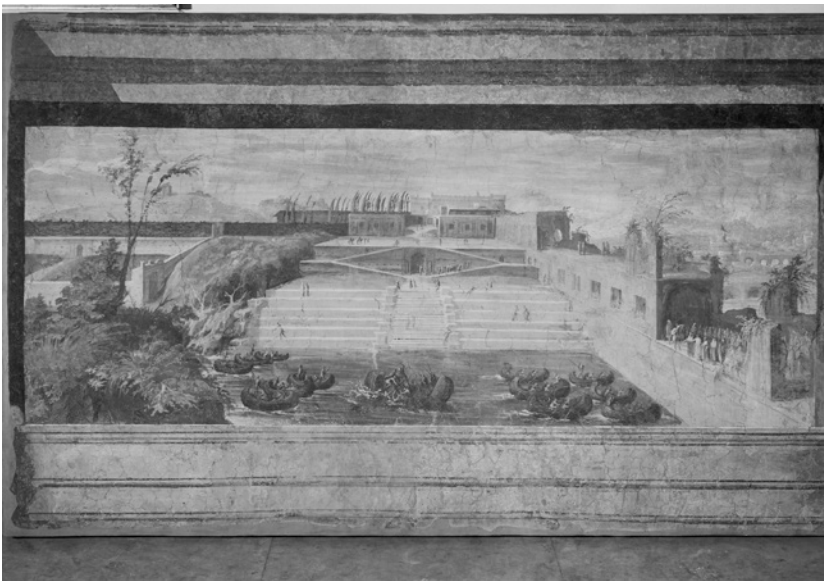


FIGURE 8.10 *Perino del Vaga, Belvedere Court as a naumachia, 1542–47. Rome, Castel Sant' Angelo.*

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settings of spectacle with the new locations of antiquities in loggias, villas or gardens, considered below; the playfulness of spectacle also permitted jokes, like the parody laureations on the Capitol in Leo's papacy.¹⁰⁰ The Virgilian link between the renewal of Rome's glory and the Dea natura triumphant appears in the 1513 Medici pageant on the Capitol. Rome was carried on Cybele's chariot, emerging from a golden globe as she is called from the shadows of past neglect.¹⁰¹ Palliolo extols the decoration of the 1513 Capitol theatre with "hostili spoglie et vittoriosi trophæi", alluding to the triumphal character of the edifice and the occasion.¹⁰² The 1513 spectacle as "earthly paradise" also drew on Hesperidean allusions of the *renovatio medicea* which were exploited in the Belvedere sculpture court or *viridarium*, where the apple-bearing statues of *Commodus attired as Hercules* and the *Venus Felix* were celebrated as offering *mala aurea* or *mala medicea*.¹⁰³ Andrea Fulvio concludes *Antiquaria Urbis*

Germanello's letter to Isabella D'Este, 19 February 1520: "el carro con la imagine della Dea Isis, dea de le terra in colosso facta ad similitudine de uno simulacro de dicta dea, che ha el papa in sua loggia antiquissimo e bello" ("the car with the image of Isis, a colossus of the earth goddess made in likeness of a most ancient and beautiful statue of the said goddess, which the pope has in his loggia"). On triumph as a metaphor in display of sculpture collections, see Christian, "Architecture and Antique Sculpture in Early Modern Rome", forthcoming in *Blackwell's Companion to Early Modern Architecture* ed. Alina Payne (Oxford: Blackwell: 2016).

- 100 See Leonard Barkan, "The Beholder's Tale: Ancient Sculpture, Renaissance Narratives", *Representation* 44 (1993), 133–66. The objects of these mock triumphs were Camillo Querco, crowned with laurels, bays and cabbage leaves, as related by Giovio, and the unsuspecting poet Cosimo Baraballo, Abbot of Gaeta, in 1514, devised by Cardinal Bibbiena. This parody laureation ended in confusion as Leo x's elephant Annon, used as the poet's mount, became startled and tossed Baraballo into the air at Castel Sant'Angelo; Baraballo appears on Annon in intarsia on a door of the Stanza della Segnatura. See Pinelli, "Feste", 294, n. 8; Trapp, "Owl's Ivy", 227 (on Alexander Pope's reference to Querco's coronation), 237.
- 101 A drawing by Peruzzi of Cybele on her chariot (British Museum) is claimed by Farinella, *Archeologia*, 67–68, to be a design for the car; see Palliolo's *Narratione*, in Cruciani, *Campidoglio*, 52–53. The Cybele theme reappears in the 1545 Festa D'Agone when the car representing the *rione* Pigna, which took its name from the gigantic Roman bronze pine cone, carried a statue of the Dea natura. A Siennese observer who described the Festa quoted *Aeneid* vi. 781–787 on Berecynthia and Rome; see Cruciani, *Teatro*, 553.
- 102 Palliolo, *Narratione*, in Bruschi, "Il teatro capitolino", 199.
- 103 Palliolo claims: "quell di fussero stati non nel Theatro ma nel paradiso terrestre", *Narratione*, in Cruciani, *Campidoglio* 54. The Hesperidean allusions of the 1513 Capitol festivities centred on Leo x's chariot; see descriptions of Altieri and Palladius in Cruciani. *Commodus* stood at the entrance to the garden, over the Virgilian inscription "Procul este profani", *Aeneid* vi.258, the Cumaean Sibyl's prohibition as the divinity approaches the

(1513), dedicated to Leo X, with *Venus Felix* offering the apples of the Hesperides in the Belvedere.¹⁰⁴

The complementarity of garden and civic settings for triumphal display suggests the return of antiquity as the recreation of an idyllic garden city. Already in Biondo's *Roma instaurata* the ancient *horti* of the city and the rustic-idyllic origins of theatre are discussed. Such associations appear in the early triumphal ephemera, like the verdant arches erected for the entry of Borso D'Este in 1471, with flowery archivolt of myrtle, box, ivy and laurel "a similitudine de quelli archi triumphali".¹⁰⁵ The theme could be treated at varying levels of seriousness, from the extended realm of Venus in the *Hypnerotomachia* to Sixtus v's urban renovation where the antiquarian *perigesis* turns to traversal of a pilgrimage topography. Cinquecento villas become potent sites for topographic arrangements which could suggest the ideal ordering of a territory while maintaining the flexibility, licence and idealisation granted by the garden. The relaxed decorum of garden and villa sites, remarked by Alberti, encouraged fluid allusions, with epigrams and epigraphy associating works with their changing contexts.¹⁰⁶ We have seen the problems when such environments are divorced from their recreative relation to active life, as in the *Hypnerotomachia*.

The theatricals and games, often seemingly far-fetched or affected, in which the Humanists so engaged were activities through which scenes of antiquity could be realised. If theatricals were a way of rehabilitating antiquities, the antiquities provided what we have called topical articulation, as foci of metaphoric invention that could illuminate or transform the occasion while remaining part of the context. Antiquities become integrated in a discourse and thus in a movement towards some kind of knowledge. The performances that turned a villa or *vigna* into a scene were often diverse, adaptable genres like eclogues, orations and *intermedi* which could be performed on various occasions or locations without a loss of decorum. The staging of eclogues and

grove where she performs rites that will allow Aeneas to descend into Hades and hear the prophecy of Rome's greatness.

104 "Hesperidum servans pomaria sacra sororum/ Sub Vaticano". Pray Bober, "Pomponius Laetus", 460, sees the theme of the revitalised Golden Age in the verse produced under Julius II and Leo X as the "culmination of encomial verse dedicated to Sixtus IV by poets in Laetus' circle".

105 Described by Francesco Ariosto (father of Ludovico), in Cruciani, *Teatro*, 134–39. The structures suggest the verdant exedra in Mantegna's *Madonna della Vittoria*, and his funerary chapel, Mantua, Sant'Andrea.

106 Alberti, *De re aed.* IX.1, elaborates the licence, playfulness and allusiveness of the suburban villa, where non-canonical capitals and telamons entertain (*ludere*) the spectator with a charming trick.

poetry contests or addresses in antiquarian gardens makes the artwork 'speak' (following the clichés of sophistic *ekphraseis*) and draws it into a dialogic context.¹⁰⁷ It also concerns their restoration in salubrious new settings of Christian *otium* (e.g. cardinal's villas) in contrast with the wastelands where they had lain as broken idols.¹⁰⁸ In becoming objects of discussion, artworks also show their power to instruct. In the best known case, the Belvedere Statue Court, relations between statues and their successive papal owners were recast in re-arrangements and epigrams to draw out various mythological and political themes.¹⁰⁹

Topoi establish themselves quickly, as in the popular *nympha loci* or "Sleeping Nymph" fountain figures, accompanied by Giannantonio Campano's pseudo-antique epigraph which became the most famous of Neolatin epigrams; a similar, cruder figure appears in the *Hypnerotomachia*.¹¹⁰ The verse or

107 On the Coryciana, the poetry contests promoted by the Luxemburg prelate Johannes Goritz at Sansovino's statue of *St Anne, Mary and Christ* (1512, Sant'Agostino), followed by festivities in the *vigna* of Goritz on the slopes of the Capitol, see Pray Bober, "The Coryciana and the Nymph Corycia", *JWCI* 40 (1977), 223–39; Christian, *Empire*; Barkan, *Unearthing*, 209ff.; idem, "Beholder's Tale"; Domenico Gnoli, *La Roma di Leo X* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1938), 151–60; Joseph Ijsewijn, "Poetry in a Roman Garden: The Coryciana", in *Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Peter Godman and O. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 211–31. The epigrams were edited by Biagio Pallai (Blosius Palladius) in Rome, 1524; see *Coryciana*, ed. Joseph Ijsewijn (Rome: Herder, 1997); Motta, *Castiglione*, 331–83. Mime type defamatory poems mocking artworks and artists provided another species of epigraphy.

108 For antiquities properly situated within cardinal's villas in contrast to lying abandoned in squalor, see Christian, *Empire*, 196–97. Bober, "Coryciana", 237, quotes an inscription procured by Goritz for his collection which relates the restoration of a nymphaeum damaged by exposure and sullied with the squalor of filth: "Nyfium sordium squalore foedatum et marmoreum nuditate deforme ad cultum pristinum revocavit". Kim Butler, "Reddita lux est": Raphael and the Pursuit of Sacred Eloquence in Leonine Rome", in *Artists at Court*, 146–48, notes repeated allusions to the illumination of darkness and the shining bodies ("candida membra") of recovered ancient statues in the *Coryciana*.

109 On the precedents for the arrangement of the Belvedere Statue Court, see Christian, "Architecture", forthcoming.

110 The *nympha loci* sleeps to the sound of waters and begs passers-by not to disturb her: HUIUS NYMPHA LOCI. SACRA CUSTODIA FONTIS./ DUM BLANDAE SENTIO MURMUR AQUAE./ PARCE MEUM, QUISQUE TANGIS CAVA MARMORA, SOMNUM/ RUMPERE. SIVE BIBAS SIVE LAVERE TACE. The epigram circulates in manuscripts from the 1460s and 70s; see Elizabeth MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph: Origins of a Humanist Fountain Type", *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), 357–65; Pray Bober, "Coryciana"; Christian, *Empire*, 134–35; Maria Ruvolet, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 103–06. A sleeping nymph statue in a

variants on it appear repeatedly above antique and copied slumbering female figures in fountains, starting with Quattrocento gardens like that of Domenico della Rovere.¹¹¹ Nymph fountains with accompanying poems, inscribed, performed or circulated, appeared in the gardens of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI), de' Rossi and Angelo Coloccio, at the core of the antiquarian poetic culture of early Cinquecento Rome.¹¹² The most monumental of such installations, the *Cleopatra*, exemplifies the conjunction of triumphal and idyllic-erotic allusions celebrated through epigram, spectacle and garden decoration.¹¹³ Displayed like the Venus fountain of the *Hypnerotomachia* with water flowing from her breasts, in the papacy of Julius III (1550–55) she was re-installed in a chamber decorated with Mosaic iconography.¹¹⁴

The sleeping nymph as a well-documented 'speaking object' shows the range of things an antique could be made to say: she is a type for contemplative *quies* as well as erotic arousal, she can 'utter' or 'inspire' encomia celebrating her new possessor, she can be deployed in triumphal displays.¹¹⁵ The statue 'speaks' through the epigram, the fountain 'lives' as it is invoked by a troupe of poets or the text embodied in the material form of a monument. Michelangelo varies the topos in the epigram where the Medici Chapel *Night* asks not to be wakened to unhappy life from her dreaming in the stone; the *quies* of the nymph in her locus becomes a pessimistic reflection.¹¹⁶ The desirability of the supine nymph is a figure for the pursuit of antiquity, as in the

case in Porto Quaglio, Taenarum is described by Ciriaco d'Ancona in 1447 (*Commentaria*, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Cod. Trotti 373, f. 122), in Brown, *Venice*, 86–87. Barkan, "Beholder's Tale", 148, compares the sleeping/waking states to the art/life distinction.

111 See Christian, *Empire*, 136, and bibliography.

112 For the nymph in the De' Rossi collections, see Christian, "De' Rossi", 149–50. On the Borgia fountain, praised in poems by Paolo Spinoso of the 1460s and 1470s, one of which describes a group of poets assembled at the fountain to sing praises of Borgia, see idem, *Empire*, 135. On Coloccio's garden and its relation to the Coryciana, see Bober, "Coryciana"; Gnoli, *Roma*; Ijsewijn, "Poetry".

113 On the redeployment of the figure by successive popes, see Brummer, *Statue Court*, 154–82, 220–21, 226, 237, 254–62. Castiglione's Latin poem *Cleopatra* was published in an appendix to a Venetian edition of Sannazaro's Latin poems (1530); see Motta, *Castiglione*, 367.

114 See Norman Canedy, "The Decoration of the Stanza della Cleopatra", *Essays in the History of Art presented to Rudolf Wittkower* ed. Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard and Milton J. Lewine (London: Phaidon, 1967), 110–18.

115 Christian, *Empire* 135, notes that Borgia's fountain, like the *Three Graces* owned by Prospero Colonna in the 1460s, served to "inspire poets to compose panegyric epigrams about its owner".

116 Barkan, "Beholder's Tale", 148–49; MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph", 357.



FIGURE 8.11 Cleopatra as installed in the Belvedere Court. Francisco de Holanda, *Desenhos das Antigualhas*, 8v. Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

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Hypnerotomachia; her passivity suggests the ease with which antiquities can be manipulated and reworked into varied contexts.¹¹⁷ As Barkan remarks, such statues could become figures for complex temporalities, denoting their surroundings as timeless pleasure gardens, as recreations of ancient sites and as loci of “varying forms of narrative time”.¹¹⁸ He notes the narrative time of the statues of the Belvedere garden whose epigrams invented new classical narratives and assisted viewers to “compos[e] their own experience of beholding”.¹¹⁹

Belvedere sculpture verse continued even in the form of censure, such as Gianfrancesco Pico’s poem *De Venere et Cupidine expellendis* (1512), his condemnation of the ‘invasion’ of the Vatican gardens by the lascivious pagan gods.¹²⁰ Another critique of the antiquarian garden, Erasmus’ *Convivium religiosum* (1522, subsequently revised), shows how word-image configurations were integral to the villa as a privileged site of topical articulation.

In *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus compared the collections of sculptural fragments by Roman antiquarians to the paganism he detects in Roman Ciceronianism.¹²¹ In the *Convivium* the garden of the Christian Humanist Eusebius shows how *honestum otium* revitalises the spirit for acts of Christian charity, and provides a setting for scientific knowledge, rather than the literary delights of antiquarian gardens.¹²² The villa in the *Convivium* is a scene where a dialogue and banquet are staged, with the topical disclosure of the garden through its statuary linked to the theme of instruction through sight. Like its antiquarian objects of criticism, Erasmus’ corrective exhibits a self-conscious, quasi-dramatic character to the progression through a topography.

The garden tour begins with a statue of St Peter as gatekeeper instead of a Mercury or centaur: Christ, not the “obscene Priapus” guards the garden.¹²³

117 See Barkan, *Unearthing*, 175–88, for cases of such mutability.

118 Ibid., 238. On the complex temporalities of recovery of the antique, see Christian, “Architecture”; Anne-Marie Sankovitch, “Anachronism and Simulation in Renaissance Architectural Theory”, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 49/50 (2006), 188–203.

119 Barkan, “Beholder’s Tale”, 138, 143.

120 Gianfrancesco Pico was provoked by the *Venus Felix*; see Gombrich, “Hypnerotomachiana”, 104–108.

121 *Ciceronianus*, 337, 394–6.

122 The dialogue ends with a Christian meal where the scriptures and Cicero are discussed, and with the departure of Eusebius to offer spiritual comfort to a dying man and settle a dispute.

123 Bembo possessed a statue of Priapus in his garden which ‘spoke’ through the obscene epigram composed for it by Celio Calcagnini, *Priapi admonitio in horto Bembi*. See Giancarlo Fiorenza, “Dosso Dossi at the Court of Ferrara”, in *Artists at Court*, 184.

Each plant bears an inscription and the garden contains a series of educational decorations, depicting various species of plant and animal and the world's waters and fish. Each plant and animal carries a moral message or symbolic meaning, providing a topic for reflection or instruction, many drawn from the *Adagia*. Thus a *trompe l'oeil* marble which shows avoidance of profligacy also warns the visitor not to judge hastily on the truth of appearances. The allegorical interpretations of the *ornatus mundi* in hexaemeral literature (e.g. Ambrose) are updated to exhibit Erasmus' study of proverbs and metaphor. Maps and religious pictures in the villa also emphasise learning through sight.¹²⁴ The painted encyclopaedia on the garden walls replaces the poetic topoi evoked by antique sculpture with a topics of knowledge, and the cult of antiquarian *memorie* is substituted with a visual mnemonics.

The garden, where plants are ordered according to species and use, is a place of utility and delight; its streams flow to clean the kitchens of the villa, where an erudite and pious dinner takes place. The message for a learned Christian Humanism to replace the sensual frivolities of recovered paganism is clear; it also assumes that the garden works as a quasi-dramatic setting. Timotheus, one of the visitors, exclaims as he examines the taxonomic frescoes: "who could get tired of living in such a changing theatre".¹²⁵

The Role of Ruins

The description of *ornatus mundi* in *De natura deorum*, includes man-made places in the celebration of nature's varied habitat. The antiquarian fragment infuses the habitat with historical allusion, creating a kind of composite natural-historical ornament. Barkan remarks on the historical openness of the non-finite and the landscape with ruins which admits the historical imagination as a collaborative force.¹²⁶ Early antiquarian descriptions like Cristoforo Buondelmonti's account of a literary *vivarium* in Crete or Ciriaco D'Ancona's

124 Paolo Cortesi, *De cardinalatu* (1510), II, Chapter 2 suggests the instructive decorations of the cardinal's palace, including painting showing mathematical devices, exotic animals and maps. See Kathleen Weil-Garris and John D'Amico, "The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's 'De Cardinalatu'", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 35 (1980), 94–97.

125 "cui possit obrepere taedium in hoc theatro versanti", *Conv. relig.* in Erasmus, *Opera Omnia* 1.3 (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1972), 238, ll. 238–39.

126 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 207.

descriptions of statues in Cyprus and Taenarus stress the relation between sculpture and idyllic natural settings.¹²⁷ Pius II describes the ruined landscapes of Tivoli and Ostia in *Commentaries* 5.27 and 11.19.¹²⁸ In the drawings of antiquities of Giuliano da Sangallo in Codex Barberini 4424 or the sketchbooks of Maarten van Heemskerck and other, anonymous Flemish artists in Rome, the relation between vegetation and (vegetal) ornament takes on another significance.¹²⁹ Plants growing from buildings as a sign of the decay which is a prerequisite for renovation appear in topographic *vedute* and in such diverse architectural treatises as Serlio's *Terzo libro* (1540) and the Barbaro-Palladio Vitruvius commentaries of 1556 and 1567. Serlio's frontispiece to the *Terzo libro*, featuring a crumbling arch with the epigraph ROMA QUANTA FUIT IPSA RUINA DOCET shows fragmentation as a precondition of the analytic study promoted by his taxonomic presentation of components for selection and combination.¹³⁰

127 See Brown, *Venice*, 80, 86, 90, 305, n. 40, 307, n. 87, 308, n. 99 see also 121, on Felice Feliciano's description of an excursion on the southern shore of Lake Garda in 1464 (in which Mantegna participated) as a *viridarios paradisiosos*.

128 Eneas Silvio Piccolomini, *I commentarii* (Milan: Adelphi, 2nd ed. 2004) I, 984–87; II, 2200–3.

129 See Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo*. Van Heemskerck's sketches of Roman antiquities, made 1532–c. 37, are mostly in two albums in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, inv. 79.D.2 and 79.D.2°; see *Die Römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck im Königlichen Kupferstichkabinett zu Berlin*, ed. Hermann Egger and Christoph Hülsen, (Berlin, 1913–16, repr. Soest-Holland: Davaco, 1975); Ilja Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1977); Elena Filippi, *Inventio Urbis* (Milan: Berenice, 1990); Arthur Di Furia, "Maerten van Heemskerck's Collection Imagery in the Netherlandish Pictorial Memory", *Intellectual History Review* 20, 1 (2010), 27–51; Kathleen Christian, "For the Delight of Friends, Citizens and Strangers: Maarten van Heemskerck's Drawings of Antiquities Collections in Rome", in Tatjana Bartsch and Peter Seiler, eds, *Rom zeichnen. Maarten van Heemskerck 1532–1536/37* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2012), 129–156; Nicole Dacos, *Quanta Roma fuit ou l'invention du paysage de ruines* (rev. ed. Brussels: Somogy, 2004).

130 The tag makes its earliest appearances in a 1536 drawing of the Septizonium and Palatine in van Heemskerck, 79.D.2a, fol. 87 v, 85r. The artists of 79.D.2a were identified by Egger and Hülsen in *Die Römischen Skizzenbücher* as "Anonymous A" and "Anonymous B"; for Dacos' attribution, see *Roma*. The epigraph remains in the Franceschini 1584 and 1619 editions of Serlio, when the frontispiece is replaced by a title page with classical tabernacle. Dacos, *Roma*, 22–27, discusses the development of the tag from the opening lines of poem



FIGURE 8.12 *Maarten van Heemskerck, Ruins of the Palatine Hill, c. 1532–37. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.*

PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM

The waste-ground plants illustrate the disjunction between the temporality of human works and cyclical nature, but also the potential analogy between natural regeneration and renovation of the man-made habitat. The scattered, clustered Roman topography, with *memorie* dotted through pastures and wasteland, could be underpinned by the universalizing city-nature analogy.

Rome's imperial status as Great Mother made it the man-made equivalent to nature as well as its typological character as bride of Christ. Antiquarian and typological representations of the *urbs* are deeply intertwined in images of Rome's glory and ruin, as exemplified by the image of Rome in the 1447 illumination to Fazio degli Uberti's *Dittamondo* (BNF, ms. it. 81) as a sibyl, black-garbed like a widow, seated solitary in a way which suggests allusion

36 of Hildebert of Lanvin "Par tibi, Roma. Nihil, cum sis prope tota ruina/quam magni fueris integra, fracta doces" ("nothing compares to you, Rome, since almost all in ruins you show, broken, how great you were when you were whole"). On Hildebert's verse, see Settis, "Continuità, distanza, conoscenza", *Memoria dell'antico* 111, 375–486. Serlio speaks of breaking and spoiling cornices and pediments to insert tablets and coats of arms (*Libro Straordinario*, 2r).



FIGURE 8.13 *Serlio, Terzo libro, 1540, frontispiece. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, 1941.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

to Lamentations 1:1 and *Purgatorio* VI.112–14.¹³¹ The ruins of Rome and their counterpart, the chaotic, ongoing building of the *renovatio*, could also suggest divine retribution for the city's sinfulness, especially following the Sack of Rome, as in Reformation polemics on Rome as Babylon.¹³² Ruins scattered through a wasteland form the locus for images of death and mortality from Carpaccio's *Entombment of Christ* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), c. 1505 to Vesalius' myological plates in Book II of the *Fabrica corporis humani* (1543).¹³³

The mixture of historical reference and Roman universality in antiquarian topographies is exemplified by the *Tempus edax rerum* ascribed to Hermanus Posthumus (1536) where a plethora of prized antiquities, known from Roman collections, are re-scattered as fragments through a fantastic topography.¹³⁴ The tablet at the centre of the painting laments "envious Age" which has destroyed all things but artists and architects are shown studying the identifiable remains whose abundance and variety invite typology as well as restitution.¹³⁵ The image shows the muddling of nature and antiquity in

131 For Jerusalem as widow, see Baruch 4:5–5:9; Isaiah 54:4; Lamentations 1:1, which bemoans Jerusalem, once *domina gentium* and *princeps provinciarum*, now sitting alone like a widow reduced to dependency. Nuria Calduch-Benages, "Jerusalem as Widow" in *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2008: Biblical figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 162, notes that representation of cities as widows signals "a situation in which the city cannot provide for itself".

132 See Christian, "For the Delight of Friends, Citizens and Strangers: Maarten van Heemskerck's Drawings of Antiquities Collections in Rome", 144, on a Lucas Cranach print, *Destruction of Babylon* in the *September Testament* (1522) which shows the fragmented city sliding into the jaws of Hell, citing Christof Thoenes "St Peter als Ruine: zu einigen Veduten Heemskercks", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 49 (1986), 481–501, on Heemskerck's depiction of modern 'ruins' or buildings in construction.

133 In Carpaccio's *Entombment* Christ's body awaits burial amongst antique fragments and fragmented human bodies—including a skeleton standing on a plinth like a statue. On the use of ruins and mutilated statues in Vesalius, see Dacos, *Roma*, 118; Glenn Harcourt "Andreas Vesalius and the Anatomy of Antique Sculpture", *Representations* 17 (1987), 28–61; Clare Guest, "Art, Antiquarianism and Early Anatomy", *Medical Humanities*, 40, 2 (December 2014), 97–104.

134 Hohenbuchau Collection, on Permanent Loan to Liechtenstein. The Princely Collections, Vienna. See Dacos, *Roma*, 17–32.

135 The tablet reads: TEMPUS EDAX RE-/ RUM TUQUE INVI-/DIOSA VETUSTAS/ O[MN]IA DESTRUITIS, quoting Ovid, *Metamorphoses* xv.234–6. Marcia Hall, *After Raphael*, 138, notes the temporal allusion in the presence of the sundial from the Della Valle collection amongst the antiquities and the figures descending through a ruined vault to explore

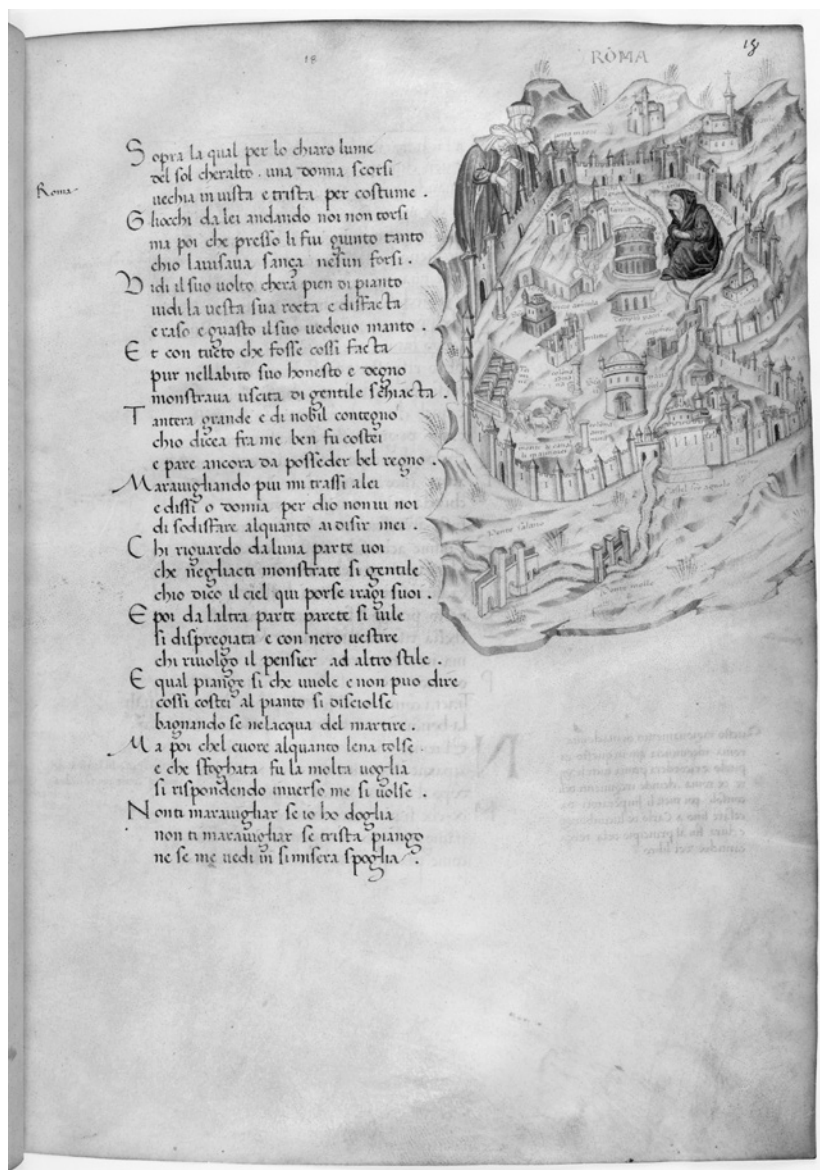


FIGURE 8.14 *Rome as a sybil, illumination to Fazio degli Uberti, Dittamondo, 1447, fol. 18r. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.*

PHOTO: BNF.



FIGURE 8.15 Hermanus Posthumus, *Tempus edax rerum*, 1536. Liechtenstein. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna.

PHOTO: LIECHTENSTEIN. THE PRINCELY COLLECTIONS

Rome, as it is difficult to distinguish remains from the ground; the gathering of antiquities from various locations and their jumbled presentation also suggests the visual counterpart to a miscellany, especially as we see figures whose drawings will make the antiques objects of imitation. The literary miscellany was described rhetorically as a meadow full of mixed flowers; *Tempus edax rerum* shows Rome as a universal but disordered ground, whose miscellaneous *memorie* are species are to be ordered and described.

The seemingly random, heterogeneous quality of some of the collections depicted by Heemskerck suggests an open-ended ordering—or a process by which order and ornament are recovered from a wilderness of fragments.¹³⁶ Heemskerck plays cleverly with the acanthus in his drawings, as exemplary Roman ornament and waste-ground thistle, whose clumps grow out of

grotte. Salvatore Settis, “Collecting Ancient Sculpture: the Beginnings” in *Studies in the History of Art. Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Eike D. Schmidt and Nicholas Penny (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2008), 12–31, reads the image as a *paysage moralisé* and a projection of works ‘saved’ in collections back into a landscape of ruins.

136 On Heemskerck’s methods of composition and styles of arrangement in the collections he depicted, see Christian, “Delight”, 136–42.

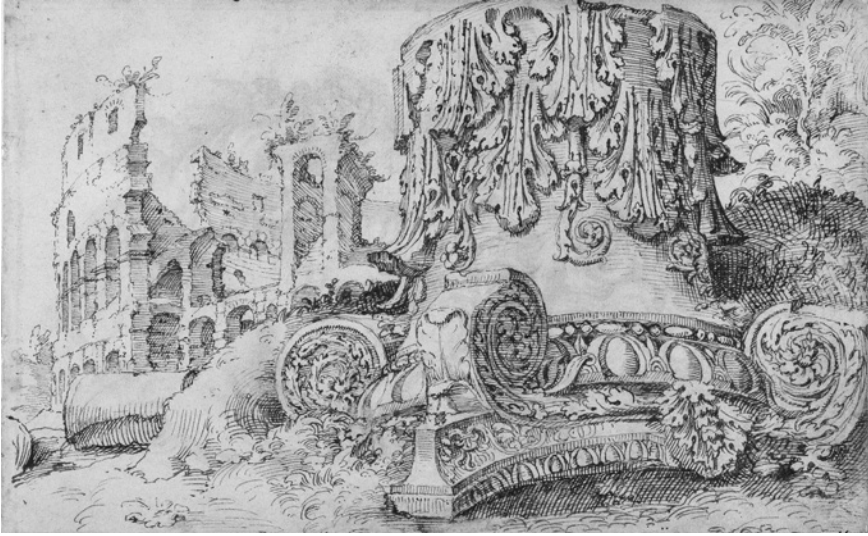


FIGURE 8.16 Maarten van Heemskerck, *Roman sketchbook*, study of Corinthian capital from c. 1532–36.

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ruinous *memorie*.¹³⁷ In the study of a corroded Corinthian capital (Berlin 79D2 28r), the carved acanthus has decayed to become as random as the plants that grow from the Colosseum in the background. By their elegance, Heemskerck's drawings also show the transformation of the wasteland into a landscape of cultural renewal.

Poggio Bracciolino's description of ruined Rome as the theatre of Fortune in *De varietate fortunae* I recounts Rome's transformation from woods (citing *Aen.* VIII.348) to city to wasteland; the renovation of the city will aspire to transform this desert waste into a garden.¹³⁸ (Such transformation is also implied by the positive evaluation of Vitruvius' satyr scene, as in Prisciani's *Spectacula*, which speaks of the delights and romance of the country.)¹³⁹ The antiquarian

137 See the drawing of the Forum of Nerva, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin 79D2a 37r, where acanthus type foliage grows from the remains of a Corinthian column. Settis, "Continuità, distanza, conoscenza", *Memoria dell'antico* 111, 375, says of Hildebert's *Roma quanta fuit* "the weeds on the ruins are as though transformed into festive garlands" ("Quasi . . . l'erba sui ruderi [si trasformi] in festive ghirlande").

138 Poggio, *De varietate fortunae* I.1–2; I.7.

139 Prisciani, *Spectacula*, 46: "i [satirici] cantano et representano la dolceza et piacere de le campagne et ville, li amori et inamoramenti de pastori"

topography permits the fusing of two *theatrum mundi* topoi—creation as the object of contemplation and festivity, and the world as the theatre of chance. Heemskerck shows how such topical understandings of theatre were rendered visually; the theatrical structure underlying views of apparently random aggregates of ruins is a pre-condition of *vedute* where antiquities appear integrated into urban landscapes.

Heemskerck fabricated *vedute* by juxtaposing vistas and objects as though they formed part of the same scene, thus creating amalgams which could give distorted impressions of relative scale.¹⁴⁰ Such fabrication feeds the theatricality which becomes the armature for the landscape adorned with antiquities. The concocted antiquarian topography becomes a standardised setting for the theatrical depictions of the Renaissance decorated room; loss of specificity will ultimately render such scenes generic, composed of building types (or topoi) which function as mere common-places. Thus the *capriccio* presents the relation between ruins and nature as an object for the viewer's fantasy (or merely fancy); the collaborative force of the imagination in the ruined landscape verges on cliché.

Heemskerck excels in creating complex perspectives with multiple viewing points stressed by the oblique angles at which monuments are placed. The variety of viewpoints emphasises the piecemeal character of the objects shown; not only are the buildings and antiquities disparate but they appear alongside banal quotidian objects.¹⁴¹ This co-existence of the everyday with the monumental suggests that the exemplarity of antiquity brings with it an aesthetic of the fragmentary. Heemskerck shows the accidental as a mode of contemplating the antique—although his drawings show collections which were symmetrically arranged, with similar formats or subjects (e.g. roundels, satyrs or Pans) shown as pendants.¹⁴² He illustrates how the 'praise' of antique ornament detaches from moral exemplarity to become associated with the endurance and allusiveness of *memorie*.

The 'random' quality delineated by Heemskerck is thus carefully orchestrated at the level of object as topos, and in the underlying perspectival organisation; the multiple viewing points and sometimes fictitious assemblages

140 On van Heemskerck's *falsi*, see Christian, "Delight", 136–42; idem, *Empire*, 157, on his composite views, assembled from views made in different parts of Rome. Jacopo Bellini similarly combined epigraphs and statuary from different sources in his drawings of Roman monuments (Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, ff. 44–45); see Brown, Venice, 122, 128.

141 See for example Heemskerck, 79.D.2, 3v, showing Casa Maffei, a display which was old-fashioned at the date of his drawing. I am grateful to Kathleen Christian for this point.

142 See Christian, "Architecture", on symmetrical display and its architectural housing.

suggest the fluid relationships which can be created between fragments while they also manipulate the viewer and the things displayed.¹⁴³ These 'arbitrary' juxtapositions echo the occasional, improvisational meanings created by word-image relations in poetry contests and theatricals which related randomly damaged antiques to one another or to a given context. We discussed 'topical articulation' in Cicero's dialogues, where objects have a tropical or associative character, inspiring and turning thought or conversation. The treatment of antiquities in Renaissance festivities is both more conventional and more aestheticised. The *anticaglie* are subjects of Neolatin conventions and topoi; the tension between the movement of dialogue and the emergence of an artefact from the setting in Cicero becomes a situation where the objects supposedly 'provide' or 'contain' the themes like topics.

Heemskerck's Roman views show how the "theatre of Fortune" theme and theatre as topos for the *exornatio mundi* merges with theatre *qua* scenography.¹⁴⁴ Once an antiquarian aesthetic is embraced, involving historicity, re-enactment and fragmentation, theatre takes on an important role in the exhibition of the unifying context. Perspective creates a pre-ordered structure which has the power to unify place into a homogeneous field, which contains objects placed within it as fragments or ready-mades—although the symmetrical arrangement of antiques and pseudo-antiques, and the axial terraced garden appear before the great scenographic villas of the mid-Cinquecento.¹⁴⁵ The triumphal arch offered a model (and topos) for symmetrical arrangement of antiquities, while also working as an axial frame, as it appears in the drawings of Peruzzi, Serlio's tragic scene or the Roman *vedute* of Giovanni Antonio Dosio.¹⁴⁶

143 See Christian, "Delight", 152, on the "collecting rhetoric" in van Heemskerck's drawings.

144 The sketches in van Heemskerck's second sketchbook, 79.D.2a, show antiquities alongside decorations of decidedly scenic character, possibly from the palace of Marmiolo, Mantua. Dacos, *Roma*, 91–106, identifies "Anonymous A" as Hermanus Posthumus and "Anonymous B" as Michiel Gast.

145 See Christian, "Architecture". Amongst noted antique collections arranged symmetrically was the Della Valle collection, sketched by Heemskerck. The Palazzo of Domenico della Rovere in the Borgo contained an axial terraced garden containing some antiquities.

146 See Christian, *ibid.*, for the influence of the arch in arrangements of sculpture collections. See the engravings after Bramante in Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving: a critical catalogue with complete reproduction of all the prints described* (New York: M. Knoedler, 1938–48), v, pls. 634–36, which show colonnaded buildings in the foreground and an arch which form a frame through which buildings are seen in recession. See *ibid.*, iv, pl. 473 for an engraving "of uncertain school", c. 1500, showing the Arch of Trajan and buildings glimpsed through it in sharp recession.

The two modes of relating fragments were complementary, as we see in Cinquecento villa design, where elaborate topical articulation is contained within a scenographic field. Bramante's Belvedere, with its enclosure of a hillside and its transformation into a spectacle topography provided the authoritative example, to be reworked and manipulated.¹⁴⁷ Progressive reworkings show the increasing identification of the antiquarian-iconographic narrative with the centre lines of the axial field, culminating at Villa Lante at Bagnaia.

This appears at Girolamo Genga's extension at Villa Imperiale, Pesaro (1530–36), where the triumphal-pastoral character of the villa is emphatically displayed.¹⁴⁸ Orietta Rossi-Pinelli called the villa a complicated *macchina teatrale* which could articulate times of action and stimulate emotional states, furnishing elements for meditation, irony, diversion and repose.¹⁴⁹ As noted, Genga designed the first documented perspectival scene for Bibbiena's *La calandaria*, directed by Castiglione and performed in Urbino in 1513.¹⁵⁰ Serlio praised Genga for his stagecraft in the creation of "satyr" scenes and in the façade and court of Villa Imperiale he fused Roman-style monumentality with the grotto and overt theatricality.¹⁵¹ The massive façade, instantly evocative of Raphael's Villa Madama, lacks an entrance, breaking the movement between façade and court and turns the former into something like an enormous *frons scaenae*, suggestive of a Roman ruin with its five great apses. The

147 See Ackerman, *Cortile*, on the reordering, redecoration and enclosure of the Belvedere statue court, culminating in the rearrangement carried out under Pirro Ligorio from 1560.

148 Genga extended the villas built in the 1450s for the Sforza. The builder, Eleonora Gonzaga, was the second Duchess in the *Cortegiano*. Bembo praised it as the finest work of contemporary building and composed a number of epigraphs on it, one of which forms the inscription: *Fr. Mariae duci metaurensi a bellis redeunti Leonora uxor animi eius causa villam aedificavit pro sole pro pulvere pro vigiliis pro laboribus ut militare negotium requiete interposita clariorem laudem fructusque uberiores pariat*: "For Francesco Maria Duke of Metauro returning from the wars his wife Eleonora built this villa according to her wishes in reward for heat, dust, vigils and labours, so that military business, when mixed with repose, might bring forth higher praise and richer rewards". See Walter Fontana, *Scoperte e studi sul Genga pittore* (Urbino: Accademia Raffaello: Università degli studi, Istituto di storia dell'arte, 1981); Orietta Rossi-Pinelli, "La Villa Imperiale di Pesaro come spazio scenico per la corte urbinata", *Bollettino del centro internazionale di studi di architettura Andrea Palladio* 16 (1974), 219–33.

149 Ibid., 224.

150 *La calandaria* was performed in Rome for Leo x, to Peruzzi's stage design.

151 Serlio, *Secondo Libro*, 47v.

court, which originally contained a sequence of grottoes with rustic decoration, has a triumphal arch articulation reminiscent of the Belvedere, and but it is blocked from the pensile gardens which rise above it. The villa rising up a hillside is thus inverted into a grotto-court, in keeping with Genga's inventions for the *scena satirica*.¹⁵² The triumphal-idyllic convergence appears in the decorations of the villa, exhibiting illusionistic architecture, triumphal and theatrical motifs, garden scenes and—most striking—a sequence of Daphne figures as caryatids which provide the supports for a 'pergola'.¹⁵³

At Villa Imperiale, the triumphal-pastoral convergence also develops from a merging of modes to a hybrid scene, organised by the axial topography. As the scenographic character of garden design becomes stronger, the topical articulation created by epigraphy and statuary increasingly 'scripts' the spectator's experience of a space into a pre-ordered dramatic movement. This is clearest in the series of villas associated with Vignola, starting with Villa Giulia, Rome (1550–55), on which Vasari and Ammannati also worked, with supervision by Michelangelo.¹⁵⁴ The axial progression through the site is strengthened by repeated semi-circular arcades and enclosures which surround and urge the spectator forward through the villa. This culminates in the second court of the villa which reveals a sudden vertical descent into a sunken nymphaeum—not a single fountain but a whole sunken level, with mosaic pavement, caryatid nymphs, niches, apses and doorways connected by subterranean

152 The costumes and masks Genga designed for the Carnival of 1527, are described by Antonio Pinelli and Orietta Rossi, *Genga architetto aspetti dell cultura urbinata del primo 500*, (Rome: Bulzoni, 1971), 115, as "antichità guerriera e arcadiana insieme".

153 The artists who redecorated the Villa included Bronzino and the brothers Dossi; see Sabine Eiche, "Prologue to the Villa Imperiale Frescoes", in *Notizie da Palazzo Albani* 21 (1991), 99–119.

154 Vignola dedicated a discussion to stage perspectives in his *Regole della prospettiva pratica*, with commentary by Egnazio Danti (Rome: 1583); he also produced a number of drawings between 1558–61 (now in Windsor Castle) for a theatre cavea in the court of Palazzo Farnese, Piacenza; see Christof Thoenes, "Vignola e il Teatro farnese a Piacenza", *Bollettino di centro internazionale di studi di architettura Andrea Palladio* 16 (1974), 243–56; Bruno Adorni, in *Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola*, ed. Bruno Adorni, Christoph Frommel, Christof Thoenes and Richard Tuttle (Milan: Electa, 2002), 308–17. On the history of the text of *Regole*, see Pietro Roccasecca in *ibid.*, 91–99, 367–77. Villa Giulia was created for Julius III, who transformed the Belvedere by creating a palace in the upper court above the exedra; see Ackerman, *Belvedere Cortile*, 73–82. Bramante's semi-circular steps in the exedra, with their echo of an ancient cavea, were replaced by a straight double staircase of Michelangelo's design.



FIGURE 8.17 *Villa Imperiale, Pesaro.*

COURTESY VILLA IMPERIALE PHOTO: CARLO DELL'ORTO, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA-3.0, DESATURATED FROM ORIGINAL.

watery paths.¹⁵⁵ Like the Villa Imperiale, Villa Giulia plays with the contrast between axes of vision and baffled means of access, as the expectation of movement forward is surprised by the plunge into depth.¹⁵⁶ The sunken

155 For contemporary and seventeenth century drawings of the nymphaeum, see Frommel in *Jacopo Barozzi*, 163–95. The waters of the nymphaeum come from the Acqua Vergine, restored by Julius III. Within the palazzo of Villa Giulia, a fresco by Taddeo Zuccari shows satyrs feasting beneath trees hung with masks.

156 The contrast between sunken court and garden terrace, the similarity between palace court and grotto also appears in Ammannati's enlargement of Palazzo Pitti (1560). Ammannati exaggerated the rugged ostentation of the massive palace by the use of rusticated orders throughout the cortile. Standing in the court, the gardens are almost hidden from view, while from the piano nobile the vista of the hillside is visible but distanced by the great space of the courtyard. The engraving of Orazio Scarabelli which commemorates the 1589 naumachia shows the court covered by a velarium which obscures the Boboli gardens, as though the court were a monumental harbour. Callot recorded the spectacles in the Boboli gardens, a garden theatre whose scene was formed by the great walls of the court and, far beyond, the distant prospect of the city.



FIGURE 8.18

Ammanati, Vignola and Vasari. Villa Giulia, Rome, 1550–55.

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO, SOPRAINTENDENZA ARCHEOLOGIA DEL LAZIO E DELL'ETRURIA MERIDIONALE. PHOTO: JEAN-PIERRE DALBÉRA, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-2.0.

nymphaeum looks like a court yet appears inaccessible; beyond it rises a two-storey wall, pierced by a triple arch and a serliana above, through which a leafy garden was visible, but accessible only via a concealed entrance.¹⁵⁷

The villa was lavishly decorated with antiquities, but the drama is created by the axial planning.¹⁵⁸ Ammannati stressed this when he described the villa as a theatre and the nymphaeum as its core:

the figures are much finer and more copious, and strike those who see them with their wonder and beauty together with the ornament and relief which are greater here than in any other part, since this is the

¹⁵⁷ The commemorative medal shows the first loggia and serliana rising up behind the villa façade, with its rusticated portal, in the form of a sequence of triumphal arches. The garden originally contained aviaries.

¹⁵⁸ For illustration and discussion of the stucco and statue decorations, see *Jacopo Barozzi*, 174–191.

principal place [of the villa] and there everything is seen; one can indeed say that this is the central point of the perspective.¹⁵⁹

The Horti Farnesiani on the Palatine, created by Vignola and Giacomo del Duca from 1565–1580 for Alessandro Farnese, used similar topographic drama in a site at the heart of ancient Rome and its mythologies.¹⁶⁰ The Horti illustrate the way that Renaissance villas use artificial design to ‘discover’ their ground. This discovery is at once localised, pertaining to topographies and their myths, and generalised, in the time of origins depicted in the grotto. Remodelled in the early Seicento by Girolamo Rainaldi, and largely destroyed in nineteenth century excavations, the Horti are difficult to reconstruct, but like Villa Giulia they contained a sunken semi-circular sculpture court, entered through a rusticated triumphal arch and containing a grotto recessed into the hill, with statues and busts. The vertical progression from grotto to hilltop aviaries revealed on entering the garden was centred on the Ninfeo della Pioggia, which penetrated the hillside. The Horti alluded to the Lupercal, to Roma quadrata, to the combat of Hercules and Cacus and to the the augury which determined the Palatine as the site for Rome, all represented through the Farnese ‘renovation’.¹⁶¹ This axial organisation, with its unexpected descents

159 Letter to Marcantonio Benavides, May 1555, repr. in Giacomo Balestra, *La Fontana pubblica di Giulio III* (Rome: D. Battarelli, 1911), 69, 74: “le figure assai più belle e in maggior copia, rendono maraviglia e vaghezza a chi le vede insieme con l’ornamento e risalti assai più che in alcuna altra parte, per essere questo il luogo principale e di quivi vedersi il tutto; e ben si può dire che questo sia il punto della prospettiva”. Ammannati likens the semi-circular portico to a theatre and the screening wall of the nymphaeum court to the *frons scaenae*.

160 On the Horti Farnesiani, see the essays in *Gli orti Farnesiani sul Palatino*, ed. Giuseppe Morganti (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1990), esp. Marcello Fagiolo, “Arche-tipologie degli Orti farnesiani”, 245–251; Stefania Macioce, “Aspetti iconologici degli Orti”, 407–412; *Giardini storici: tutela, conservazione e valorizzazione; atti della giornata di studi* ed. Isa Belli Barsali (Rome: Palombi, 1988), esp. Marcello Fagiolo, “Idea degli Horti Farnesiani: “Roma quadrata” e il “Foro della pace”, 189–199; Roberto Luciani, “Horti farnesiani: prima, durante, dopo”, 159–169; Giangiacomo Martines, “Gli Horti Farnesiani tra cultura antiquaria e archeologia: tradizione e rovine del palazzi imperiali”, 97–157; H. Giess, “Studien zur Farnese-Villa am Palatin”, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 13 (1971), 179–230. The Horti was used for the meetings of the Arcadian Academy from 1696–1723.

161 The Nymphaeum alluded to the Lupercal; the lower loggia of the Casino of the Horti had decoration showing Hercules and Cacus; the enclosed garden made allusion to Roma quadrata, the aviaries to the augury and possibly to *Aen.* VIII.99–100 on the Palatine as the former Arcadian village which now reaches the sky. These allusions were celebrated in



FIGURE 8.19 *Vignola and Giacomo del Duca, Horti Farnesiani, Rome, 1565–80. Engraved Carlo Antonini after Francesco Panini, Rome 1780. The British School at Rome Library.*
 PHOTO: BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME LIBRARY

and ‘discoveries’, stratifies the archaeological and mythic meanings as they are invoked at various levels. Such stratification runs hand in hand with the continuity that reveals each topos as a stage in a larger structure, so that at any point we are conscious of the larger movement through a topography which moves us into darkness and then to ascent into the light. If this clarifies and intensifies the drama of ‘discovery’ of a site, it also involves a weakening of the dialogic context where topical articulation works most richly. We move from diverse possibilities and choices represented by metaphor to the orchestration of topoi into analogical disclosures within a synthetic field.

This also affects the apprehension of ‘nature’. Rather than a universal context articulated by the discovery of topoi, nature becomes the content of a pre-ordered structure and subject to the scenic conditions of the perspectival scene. In this sense we might consider why the grotto as locus of a hylomorphic

the 1625 epigram of A. Mariani “De monte Palatino ex septem nunc Hortis Farnesiorum”, in *Ruinarum Romae epigrammata... 1625* (Bologna, 1641), 309: “Romulus collis, domus Augustana quadrata/ Roma, Palatinus cum Jove Phoebus erant./ Haec sibi regales statuens Farnesius hortos, / Transtulit in villae compita laeta suae./ Quis modo Romolidum vires neget esse supremas,/ Quorum vi montes in paradisum abeunt?”.

drama where nature's hidden processes are divulged develops alongside axial design. At one level, the fascination with generation and decay in the grottoes and generative gods of Mannerist gardens could be seen as developing from the display of antiquities in gardens, where the ornamental contrasts of damage and form show time's work, inscribing loss and decay into the rhetoric of *laus antiquitatis*. The nymphaeum as a grotto 'discovered' by an arch, a form 'recovered' by Bramante in the Belvedere court, makes nature the subject of disclosure.¹⁶² The grotto as hylomorphic spectacle thus has a grounding role in all the other temporalities explicated in Renaissance decoration—history, myth, natural and cosmic cycle, providential narrative of salvation. In the fascination with *natura artificiosa* ornament loses its framing role to become the mode of poetic narrative in topographies structured scenographically.

The most complex and ambitious case is the Villa D'Este at Tivoli, with its "hidden theme . . . to personify subtly the nature of the Tiburtine ground", whose stratified axes contained a network of architectural fountains alluding inter alia to Ocean, the Dea natura, the Garden and Dragon of the Hesperides, the labours of Hercules and his apotheosis, the metamorphoses and prophecies of the Tiburtine Sibyl, and to Rome itself, epitomised as a miniature memory theatre ("Rometta").¹⁶³ Such attempts at 'grounding' representation—in local

162 For the elaborate architectonic development of the nymphaeum, see Bramante's nymphaeum at Genazzano, a pavilion before a dammed stream, whose rooms included a fountain and octagonal bath-house.

163 "subest quaedam recondita haud inelegans ratio ad agri Tyburtis naturam exprimendam accommodare", Uberto Foglietta, *Tiburtinum Hippolyti Estii Cardinalis Ferrariensis ad Flavium Ursinum Card. amplissimum, MDLXIX* ed. Franco Sciarretta (Tivoli: Tiburis Artistica, 2003), 5. Foglietta names Pirro Ligorio as the inventor of the gardens (ibid., 6). On the Villa D'Este, see David Coffin, *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960); idem, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); R.B. Lightbown, "Nicholas Audebert and the Villa D'Este", *JWCI* 27 (1964), 164–90; Marcello Fagiolo, "Il significato dell'acqua e la dialettica del giardino. Pirro Ligorio e la filosofia della villa cinquecentesca", in *Natura e artificio: l'ordine rustico, le fontane, gli automi nella cultura del manierismo europeo* (Roma: Officina, 1979), 190–226; Maria Luisa Madonna, "Il genius loci di villa D'Este. Miti e misteri nel sistema di Pirro Ligorio", in ibid., 195–226; idem, "Pirro Ligorio e Villa d'Este: la scena di Roma e il mistero della Sibilla", in *Il giardino storico italiano: problemi di indagine, fonti letterarie e storiche*, ed. Giovanna Ragionieri (Florence: Olschki, 1981) 173–196; Carl, "Architecture and Time"; David Dernie, *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli* (London: Academy Editions, 1996); Marcello Fagiolo, Maria Luisa Madonna and Isabella Barisi, *Villa D'Este* (Rome: De Luca, 2003); Thomas Ashby, "The Villa D'Este at Tivoli and the Collection of Classical Sculptures which it contained", *Archaeologia*, 61 (1908), 219–56; Montaigne, *Journal de voyages en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne en 1580 et 1581*, ed. C. Dédéyan (Paris: Société des Belles Lettres, 1946), 243–46; Antonio Del Re, *Antichità tiburtine* (1611), ed. Franco Sciarretta (Tivoli: Tiburis Artistica,

particularity and in the chthonic as place and temporality of origins—tend to subsume what they represent into the continuum of artifice itself, as in the proliferation of paths, narratives, multiple levels of meaning and metamorphoses at the Villa D'Este. It is not clear how the generalised theatricality of the site, stemming from the planning, relates to such specific instances of the theatre as the Rometta, with its resemblance to a stage set. The various aspects of the temporal character of the iconography (nature's cycles, chthonic origins, prophecy, pagan culture as typology, providential history, Sibylline eschatology) are all mediated through the time of re-enactment but the structuring of this re-enactment is not clarified. The elements which create the garden as 'theatre'—axial structuring, poetic allegory, use of and allusion to spectacle—are combined as though their relation to one another and to reality were perspicuous, which it is not. From this use of spatial generality as the basis for an allegorical superstructure comes the peculiar quality of the Villa D'Este, where all things are interrelated yet all meaning seems to float on the level of metaphor. It also betrays the specificity of a topography which becomes generalised so that its 'local' character can be 'discovered' via poetic allegory projected on axial planning.

Villa design in the years after the Villa D'Este, and informed by it, as at Villa Lante, Bagnaia, shows a simplification or generalisation of the iconography and a concentration on the distribution of architectural elements through a topography in a manner which suggests comparison with an urban plan.¹⁶⁴ Carl notes

the reciprocity of architectural fragments and a structured landscape. The representational nature that is embodied in ornamental motifs has been subsumed into a more generalized spatial conception that includes nature structured as a garden. From this point forwards, it becomes possible to regard city and garden as aspects of a single representational continuum mediated by rhetoric and perspective; and the direct synthesis of garden and city begins to take place in Rome with Sixtus v.¹⁶⁵

2005); Giovanni Maria Zappi, *La descrizione del raro e gentil giardino del modo fatto dall'animo regio della degna memoria dell'ill.mo e R.mo Sig.r Hipolito Cardinal di Ferrara fabricato in la magnifica città di Tivoli e destinato in luogo ove si dice valle gaudente* (1576), ed. F. Sciairetta (Tivoli: Tiburis Artistica, 2003). Ligorio's departure in 1569 and Ippolito D'Este's death in 1572 meant that the garden never reached completion, making reconstruction of the secondary fountains and the placement of statuary difficult to establish.

164 See Claudia Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante at Bagnaia: An Allegory of Art and Nature", *The Art Bulletin*, 59, 4 (1977), 553–60.

165 Carl, "Architecture and Time", 51.



FIGURE 8.21 *Villa D'Este, Rometta. From G.F. Venturini, Le fontane del Giardino Estense in Tivoli, 1691.*

COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN. PHOTO: AUTHOR.



FIGURE 8.22 *Villa Lante at Bagnaia, commenced c. 1568, completed 1590–1623.*

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. PHOTO: AUTHOR.

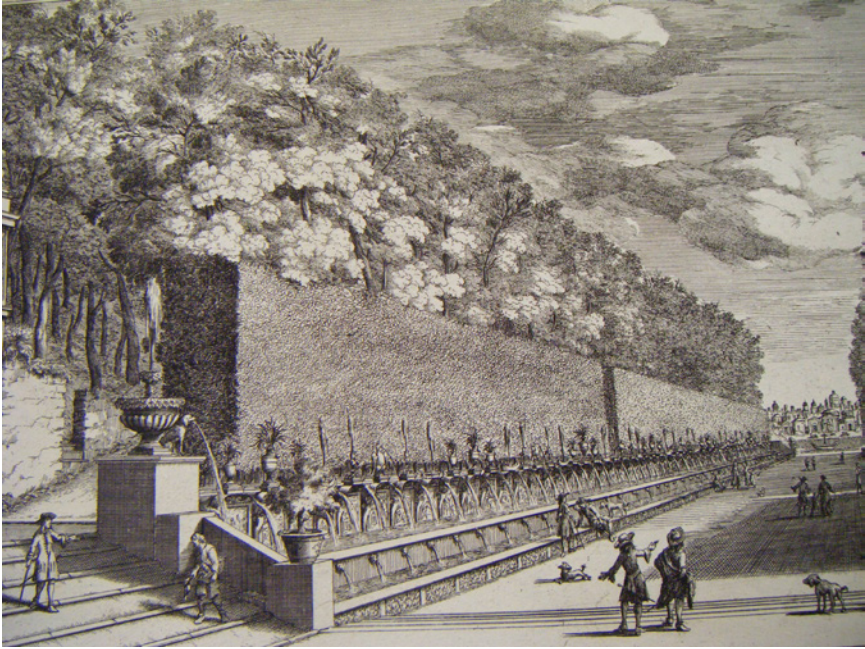


FIGURE 8.23 *Villa D'Este. Engraving of Venturini, 1691. From G.F. Venturini, Le fontane del Giardino Estense in Tivoli, 1691.*

COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN.

PHOTO: AUTHOR.

The Emblematic Continuum

We saw Bruni's figure of mosaic for eloquent speech and the passage in Alberti's *Profugiorum ab aerumna libri* III which compares writers to the inventor of mosaic flooring who created picture after picture with gathered scraps of marbles. These themes of reworking and insertion occur repeatedly in Humanist discussions of ornament and result in two complementary ends—the absorption of ornament into style as a quality of artifice and the cultivation of the decorative fragment. We shall argue that emblematic figures, with their inherently verbal-visual nature, exemplify more generally a way of conceiving decoration.

The word *emblema* is not a Renaissance recovery: Alan of Lille in the prose prologue of *Anticlaudianus* calls his work “theophanie coelestis emblema”.¹ Ralph of Longchamps in his commentary on *Anticlaudianus* notes that *emblema* properly signifies “a little piece of gold,” (*frustrum auri*), referring to the golden rule of theology.² Alan also uses *emblema* in *Theologiae regulae*, in the sense of the inner radiance of theology's meaning.³

As ornament, the *emblema* is a valuable object inserted *in* something rather than a containing frame; Erasmus thus describes the charm of archaic words which can be incorporated like inlaid decorations.⁴ While this conception of ornament had long featured in rhetorical treatises, it acquires a new resonance as associations between visual assemblages of fragments and literary

1 *Anticlaudianus*, 56. See Marshall, “Phalerae”, 244, 264, 272, n. 5. Alan in *De incarnatione Christi* speaks of each thing in creation as a picture or book which tells us of the human condition (“Omnis mundi creatura/ Quasi liber et pictura/ Nobis est, et speculum”), a figure which would have great emblematic success. Quoted by De Bruyne, *Études* II, 399, who notes the doubts over Alan's authorship.

2 Ralph of Longchamps, *In Anticlaudianum Alani commentum*, ed. Jan Sulowski, (Wrocław: Polska Akademia Nauk, 1972) 22, ll. 23–26. Citing Eriugena, Ralph also glosses “theophania” as “theologia”.

3 “propter internum intelligentiae splendorem dicuntur emblemata”, Alan, *Theologiae regulae*, PL 210, col. 622. Alan here also calls theology paradox, enigma and enthymeme—the last based on a wild etymology.

4 Erasmus, *De copia*, in *Opera Omnia*, I.6, 44, “Prisca gratiam addunt, si modice et apte velut emblemata intertextantur”. Cf. his praise of Origen's style: “his whole discourse is distinguished by *sententiae* or jewel-like *emblemata* from sacred works” (“totus huius sermo sacrorum voluminum sententiis ceu gemmulis emblematis distinctus est”).

accounts of style were fostered. In the *Hypnerotomachia*, we saw such associations stretched so that the emblematic mosaic becomes a model for an entire verbal-visual work.⁵ Once emblematic structure is grasped it becomes a means of invention for things at all scales, from the ephemeral to the monumental. From the vast production and scholarship on Renaissance emblematics, we shall focus on their character as ornament, on the treatise literature, chiefly Italian, and on Erasmus' *Adagia* where the precious insert develops its own semantics.

Epigrams and Speaking Objects

Boccaccio expressed interest in epigraphy, especially Greek epigraphy; Poggio Bracciolini's first epigraphic sylloge dates to 1403 and Ciriaco d'Ancona's *Commentaria* commenced in 1424. Important centres for sculpture and epigram collection include the court of Alfonso of Aragon in Naples, and the Roman circle and collection of Pomponio Leto in his *vigna*-aviary on the Quirinal.⁶ Epitaphs and funerary poetry or inscriptions were popular in these circles and faked epigrams quickly appeared.⁷ The epigram or epigraph was literary and monumental object, and enduring means of fame.

These associations appear in a later Neapolitan work on the *impresa*, Scipione Ammirato's *Il Rota overo dell'impresie* (1562). The treatise describes a villa whose garden contains tombs, recalling the interest in sepulchres and epitaphs amongst Roman and Neapolitan Humanists—and the juxtaposition of tombs and *impresie* of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Almost all the *impresie*

5 For the work's later success in France amongst the *Précieux*, whose taste for devices was noted, see Anthony Blunt, 'The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* in Seventeenth Century France' *JWCI* 1 (1937–8), 117–37.

6 On Boccaccio, see Lucilla de Lachenal, *Spolia: uso e reimpiego dell'antico dal 3 al 14 Secolo* (Milan: Longanesi, 1995), 370. On Cola di Rienzo's supposed interest in classical epigraphy, Medieval and Renaissance attitudes to inscriptions and pre-Renaissance collections, see Michael Greenhalgh, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 1989), 172–82. On Ciriaco, see Brown, *Venice*, 81–91. See Christian, *Empire*, 46–7, 129, on Naples, the roles of Panormita and Valla, the epigrams written on a statue of "Parthenope" sent to Alfonso of Aragon by Ludovico Trevisan, Patriarch of Aquileia, and on Leto.

7 See *ibid.*, 143–8, on Pontano's Tempietto, Naples: "[an] epigraphical collection doubling as a place of burial, approximating the form of an ancient funerary *columbarium*". On Ciriaco D'Ancona's discovery of false antique epigrams, drawing on Boethius, in the garden of Cardinal Fillastre in Trastevere, see *ibid.*, 46–7.

concern the death of Bernardino Rota's wife and recall the elegiac atmosphere of *Arcadia* with its pilgrimages to tombs and concluding *threnos* for Pontano's wife. The generic character of Petrarchan elegy and the occasional nature of the *impresa* come together in Rota's mourning; copious variation, so prized in epigrammatic invention, gives voice to melancholic repetition of loss. *Il Rota* recalls the allusions to Petrarch as father of the *impresa*, but unites the Petrarchan psychological landscape with a tomb-strewn privatised Arcadia where epitaphs exhibit topical *variatio*.

Barkan notes that for Colonna and Alberti the decorative frieze and the epigraph are part of the same artistic and commemorative activity.⁸ The epigram, with its local, lapidary character, its association with memorial, its word-image play and its capacity for imitation through variation exemplified the exploitation of word-image pairing as a means of restitution for antique fragments. We might therefore think of a range of activity which encompassed various permutations of word-image relations from inscription or dedication of verses to statues, emblematic uses of objects and discussions of literary style in visual metaphors. What these word-image relations share is a preoccupation with configuration, contextual meaning and 'setting', both as verb and noun. Such epigraphic forms thus have a distinctive semantics, and this Erasmus addresses in his *Adagia*.

Erasmus' Adagia

Erasmus made two extensive collections of ornaments of speech gathered from the ancients, the *Adagia* (first edition 1500), an encyclopaedia of sayings (*paroemia*), expanded greatly in successive editions and the *Paraboliae sive Similia* (1514), which arose from the revised edition of the *Adagia* and catalogues expressions of comparison from Plutarch's *Moralia*, Seneca, Lucian, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Pliny and Theophrastus.⁹ The immediate context of the *Adagia* is the interest in the *Planudean Anthology* in the

8 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 134.

9 The Paris 1500 *Adagia Collectanea*, with 818 proverbs was redesigned and expanded in the 1508 *Adagia Chiliades* (Venice, Aldus 1508), with 3260 proverbs; Erasmus expanded the *Adagia* through successive Froben editions to 4251 adages. For overview of the editions, see Margaret Mann Phillips, *The 'Adages' of Erasmus: A Study with Translations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), who tabulates the sources; most cited are Claudian (892 citations), Homer (666), Plutarch (618), Aristophanes Grammaticus (596), Horace and Plautus (both 475) and Plato (428). Other frequently used writers include Athenaeus, Symmachus, Aristotle, Lucian and Euripides. Scriptural proverbs are included in the 1515 edition (see *Adagia* III.10.91, "Culicem colant"), although the final number of biblical references is only 73, 69 of which are New Testament. In the 1508 *Adagia* preface to Mountjoy, Erasmus

last decades of the Quattrocento.¹⁰ Erasmus used the *Anthology* and similar collections of sayings like *Ἰωνία* (*Violetum*), an anthology of Greek proverbs by Apostolius Byzantinus.¹¹ Aldus' expanded 1503 edition of the *Anthology* was entitled *Florilegium*, a title which Hutton suggests was derived from *Metamorphoses* xv.366, "Florilegae nascuntur apes", with its connotations of variety.¹² *Varietas* is central in the lectures on the *Anthology* in the Florence *studium* by Janus Lascaris, the Byzantine editor of the 1494 *editio princeps* of the *Planudean Anthology*:

So great is the variety in it, such a supply of names and matter, such exquisite judgements on almost everything that falls within the realm of human action, together with such brevity and elegance, such grace and charm, that you might think the genius and judgement of all the wisest of men, rivalling and vying with one another, had been brought together in this single volume.¹³

Lascaris' presentation recalls Landino's praise of Horace for his ethical variety, but implies that the epigrams are like *loci communes*, sources of arguments which can be applied to various cases and amplified to provide copious discourse. This link between the epigram and *loci communes* persists in numerous

said that he wished to make a collection of theological allegories from early Christian writers but the task was too daunting.

10 Interest in the *Anthology* appears from the time of Boccaccio and through the medium of the Latin *Anthology*; see James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the Year 1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1935). Epigrammatic inscription persisted in Latin late antiquity; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.* iv.8 discusses a verse he composed to be engraved in a silver vase in the form of a shell, to be presented to Queen Ragnhild.

11 For Erasmus' use of the *Planudean Anthology*, see Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in France and in the Latin writers of the Netherlands to the Year 1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1946), 215–17; on his use of *Violetum*, acknowledged at *Adagia* II.1.1 (*Festina Lente*), see Phillips, 'Adages', 86–90. *Violetum* was completed by Apostolius' son, Aristoboulos Apostolios (Arsenios), appointed director of the Greek College in Rome by Leo x; see Hutton, *Greek Anthology in Italy*, 150–51.

12 Ibid., 149.

13 "De epigrammatis... Tanta est in eo varietas, tanta copia et nominum et rerum, tam exquisita iudicia de rebus fere omnibus, quae in humanis actionibus possunt incidere, cum tanta brevitate et elegantia, tanto lepore et venere, ut sapientissimorum omnium ingenium et iudicium non sine φιλοτιμίᾳ et concertatione quadam in unum hunc librum collatum esse existimes". Ibid., 116, translation adapted from ibid., 36. Hutton dates the lecture to 1493.

editions of the *Adagia* and in emblems books, arranged according to topic.¹⁴ If the *Anthology* was a major source for emblematic inventions, via the *Adagia* and Alciati, it was a means of endowing recovered remains with significance, so that they became 'speaking' objects which declared their relevance to their new surroundings.¹⁵ In the re-contextualizing of antiquities, the topos as argument, convention, image and place had a central role. This topical character is notable in emblematics and constitutes one distinction from tropes such as apostrophe, prosopopoeia and *descriptio* important in Medieval poetics.¹⁶

There are various tendencies in Erasmus's treatment of the ornaments which he assiduously gathers. There is the exploration of contextual meaning so that each *paroemia* emerges as a configuration of significance, and the insistence on the full expressive integration of ornament in eloquent speech. Second is the valorisation of the ornament as historical fragment which is a praise in itself.

In the prolegomena to the *Adagia* Erasmus speaks of *paroemiae* in language that exploits metaphors for *enargeia*:

If the *adagia* are woven into a discourse knowingly and in place, the whole speech will shine with star-like lights of antiquity, please with the colours of figures, gleam with gems of *sententiae*, charm with delightful delicacies, and in short excite with its novelty, delight with its brevity and persuade with its authority.¹⁷

14 In Johannes Soter's selection of Planudes, *Epigrammata Graeca Veterum* (Cologne, 1528) the epigrams are printed with Humanists' renderings and imitations, in Latin and Greek. Lascaris speaks of the epigrams as poems to be imitated. On topical arrangement of emblems, see below.

15 Alison Saunders, "Alciati and the Greek Anthology" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12, 1982, 1–18, lists 9 epigrams translated by Alciati from Soter's *Epigrammata Graeca* and 153 from Janus Cornarius, *Selecta Epigrammata Graeca Latine Versa* (Basel, 1529) of which 30 appear in the 1531 *Emblemata*; Alciati also collaborated on Cornarius' selection. See Hutton, *Greek Anthology in Italy*, 273–86, on Soter and Cornarius; *ibid.*, 195–208, on Alciati's use of Planudes, listing 40 cases in the 1531 *Emblemata*, 50 in the final editions of 1550 and 1551. Hessel Miedema, "The Term *Emblema* in Alciati", *JWCI* 31, 1968, 234–50, derives 50 of the 220 emblems from Planudes. For analogies between Graeco-Roman and Baroque conceits, see Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth Century Imagery* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1975), 20, 25–31. The *Anthology* appears often as a textual source in Franciscus Junius' *De pictura veterum* (1637).

16 See Faral, *Arts poétiques*, 70–85.

17 *Adagia* in *Opera omnia* 11.1, 64: "si scite et in loco intertextantur adagia, futurum est, ut sermo totus et antiquitatis ceu stellulis quibusdam luceat et figurarum arrideat

If the ‘inherent’ value of an *adagium* lies in its antiquity and authority, its meaning is delineated by context, and Erasmus opens the work by stating that the *adagia* are suited to things and times, i.e. specific, historical meaning.¹⁸ Hence the citations of the occurrence of each *adagium* form an exploration of classical literature while simultaneously unfolding the meaning arising from a particular *usus*. This meaning is then amplified through a commentary that develops the relations between accumulated contextual meanings so that the significance is explicated as a tissue of analogies. This process of amplification reveals the significance ‘contained’ within antique fragments as a *copia*. Erasmus speaks of the “ocean of philosophy or theology” which can be unfolded from a little adage; the emblematic brevity of the *adagium* woven into a text serves to open it out (*aperuit*) into an “ocean” of contextual meaning.¹⁹

The *adagia* function like *loci communes* as Erasmus says that knowledge of *paroemiae* serves “ad philosophiam”, “ad persuadendum”, “ad decus et gratiam orationis” and “ad intelligendos autores”. He is aware of the fascination of their fragmentary state, and quotes Quintilian’s remarks on *sententiae* to emphasise that *paroemiae* must be smoothly assimilated, not implanted in a mode that is elsewhere compared to patchwork.²⁰ Assimilation is fundamental to the semantics of the *adagia*; to employ them is to discover contextual significance as a field of correspondences where the relations between inherited, antique usage and present deployment may be perceived as a living analogy rather than a static replication. The task is to overcome the fragmentary or lifeless nature of inherited things from the treasure house (*thesaurus*) of antiquity. Erasmus compares skilful insertion of *paroemiae* to the setting of gems in a ring or gems in a ring.²¹ The compact, gem-like quality of the adage contrasts

coloribus et sententiarum niteat gemmulis et festivitatis cupeis blandiatur, denique novitate excitet, brevitate delectet, autoritate persuadeat”.

18 *Adagia*, Prolegomena. Erasmus cites Donatus in this definition of the *adagium*.

19 “Vides quantum philosophiae vel theologiae magis oceanum nobis paroemia tantilla aperuit”, *Adagia*, 62. The adage expounded is *ta philon koina* (“things are held in common amongst friends”), expanded from Pythagorean fragment to Platonic meditation to Christological teaching upon the community of the faithful and the universal love in divine creation.

20 *Adagia*, Prolegomena, 66, quoting *Inst. orat.*, VIII.5.27–8 “oratio et e singulis non membris, sed frustris collata, structura caret”; “If speech is not made from single clauses, but patched together from fragments, it lacks structure”. Cf. *ibid.*, VIII.5.34 on *sententiae* as the “eyes” of eloquence; *ibid.*, VIII.5 on the origins of *sententiae* in sentiments, opinion or striking reflection, the most ancient form being the aphorism or gnomic saying.

21 *Adagia* in *Opera Omnia* II.1, 65: “Siquidem ut non mediocris est artificii gemmulam scite includere anulo et aurum purpurae intextere, ita non est, mihi crede, cuiusvis paro-

with the configurations of meaning which appear in the process of interpretation. Proportion must be maintained between these meanings; if the *adagium*, condensed and pregnant with contextual meanings, gives significance to the speech, the speech provides the situation for the *adagium*. This reciprocal enhancement of significance between saying and context unsettles the notion of the adage as an extrinsic, fragmentary quotation.

Erasmus provides a rich model for the insertion and reading of rhetorical ornaments, where the unique significance of each use does not slide into relativism but rather provides expanding analogical patterns. This model is also pertinent to the way that the significance of objects could be recast in words to accommodate varied conditions, as seen in Chapter 8.

Emblemata, Hieroglyphs and Mosaic

Poliziano commented on the epigrammatic urge to inscribe objects when he complained that he was pestered for mottoes and sayings to adorn objects until every wall was daubed with his *bons mots* like the tracks of a snail.²² Alciati's pupil Filippo Fasanini in his 1517 translation of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica* speaks of

short sayings or marks, which [people] may apply to swords, rings, headboards, belts, lutes, beds, coaches, ceilings, tablecloths, doors, in the *musaeum*, to tables and mirrors, in the bedroom, to curtains, to

emiam apte decenterque orationi inserere". Translation of Margaret Mann Phillips, in Erasmus, *Collected Works* XXXI (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982), 19. Balthasar Gracian in his treatise on *conceitismo*, *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* (1648) similarly compares emblems to gems in the gold of elegant discourse (cited by Robert Clements, *Picta Poesis*, 27).

- 22 Poliziano, letter to Girolamo Donato, 22 April, 1490: "Nam si quis breve dictum in gladii capulo vel in anuli legatur emblemata, si quis versum lecto aut cubiculo, si quis insigne aliquod non argento dixerim sed fictilibus omnino suis desiderat, ilico ad Politianum cursitat omnesque iam parietes a me quasi a limace videat oblitos argumentis variis et titulis". "If anyone wants a saying placed on the head of sword or inserted in a ring, if anyone wants a verse on the bed or the bedroom, if anyone wants something classy not just inscribed on their silver but all over their household goods, he runs to Poliziano and now every wall seems smeared with my various inventions and inscriptions like the tracks of a snail". Quoted in Guido Arbizzoni, "Ecfrasi, emblemi, imprese" in *Ecfrasi: Modelli e esempi fra medioevo e rinascimento* ed. Gianni Venturi and Monica Farnetti (Rome: Bulzoni, 2004), 11, 516.

earthenware or silver vessels . . . and by means of which in combination with painted or sculpted figures, they can wrap the secrets of their minds in coverings [*involucris*] and paint the walls of their homes.²³

Fasanini's comments are close to Alciati's conception of his *Emblemata* as epigrams which could be used, as the preface says, for the fashioning of visual images to pin on clothes or hats, or as a means of writing with "wordless tokens" (*tacitis scribere quisque notis*).²⁴ The range of objects noted by Fasanini corresponds to what Pontano in *De splendore* (1498) calls *supellex*—the class of domestic objects which exhibit the moral virtues or vices of the owner.²⁵ Fasanini's *secreta animi* suggests an *impresa*, shown publicly but with a private meaning; the esotericising and the generalisation of the motif are two stages of the same process. What is lost here is the contextual semantics traced with sensitivity by Erasmus; Fasanini's scattering of 'hieroglyphs' over the whole range of domestic objects and apparel is reminiscent of Quintilian's comparison of overuse of *sententiae* to creation of a monstrous body full of eyes.²⁶

The loss of relation between adornment and thing adorned is still more evident in the introduction to the Lyon 1548 edition of Alciati, reproduced in 1550 and 1551:

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- 23 Quoted in Miedema, "Emblema", 249. Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* XXXIII claims that the pictures of Egyptians showed *sententiae* of philosophers, historians and poets. Discussed in Gennaro Bavarese and Andrea Gareffi, *La letteratura delle immagini nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), 89.
- 24 *Emblemata*, Paris, Christian Wechel 1534, A2v. "Tacitis scribere notis" could also be rendered "write on silent signs". The association of epigrams and devices as particularly ingenious will persist to Emanuele Tesauro, who speaks of "due piacevolissime arti, simbolica e lapidaria, che comprendono tutte le argutezze di parole e figure: quelle negli epigrammi, epitaffi, elogi, e in ogni genere d'iscrizioni argute: queste nelle imprese, emblemi, riversi, e in ogni genere di simbolo arguto", *Il Cannocchiale aristotelico* (Turin: Editrice Artistica Piemontese, 2000, facsimile of Bartolomeo Zavatta edn, Turin, 1670), 3, 736–9.
- 25 Pontano, *De splendore*, 3. Pontano distinguishes *splendor* from magnificence, which pertains to public works and contrasts it with the vice of excess. (ibid., 1). Pontano identifies *supellex* largely with *ornamenta*, such as statues, paintings, tapestries and textiles woven with gems, ivory furniture, vases or trappings for horses, and insists on their proper placing. (ibid., 3–4). Motta, *Castiglione*, 92, notes Castiglione's use of *De splendore* in description of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino (*Cortegiano* 1.2). Erasmus in the 1508 *Adagia* advocates that *Festina lente* should be engraved on every pillar, written over every temple, inscribed on gold on the double leaves of princely doors, over every temple porch, chased on episcopal rings and engraved on sceptres.
- 26 Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* VIII.5.34.

anyone [who] wishes in imagination to fill out what is empty, adorn what is bare, give speech in imagination to what is mute, assign thought to what is irrational, may take from this emblem book, as from a well-stocked cupboard, something to inscribe on the walls of a house, glass in windows, on curtains, on hangings, pictures, vases, statues, signet rings, garments, a table, the back of a couch, armour, a sword, in short every piece of equipment, anywhere at all. Then the things of common use will present on every side a form endowed with common speech, delightful to contemplate.²⁷

In this riot of prosopopeia, decorative objects are adorned with words, in a nice epigrammatic reversal of ornaments of speech described as visual decorations. The text also shows a desire to raise surfaces out of the background situation of everyday objects, described as “empty”, “bare”, “mute” and “irrational”; emptiness is associated with lack of speech. The notion that all surfaces should “speak” suggests that ornament is viewed as co-extensive with representation, with all objects exhibiting *energeia* and all words ‘adorned’ with visual figures. This range of *supellectilia* also corresponds to those depicted in ornament prints, like those produced by Daniel Hopfer of Augsburg from 1500–36, with designs for furniture, fittings, church furniture and arms, or Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder’s *Kunstbuechlein* (Strasbourg, 1537), with designs for arms, head-dresses, cartouches, capitals, column bases and candelabra.²⁸ Vogtherr advertises his book for use by painters, woodcarvers, goldsmiths, stonemasons, carpenters, armourers and cutlers; Alciati similarly spoke of his epigrams

27 “Etiam ille (inquam) usus est, ut quoties rebus vacuis complementum, nudis ornamentum, mutis sermonem, alogis rationem tribuere, aut certè affingere velit quispiam, is ex Emblematum libello, tanquam ex promptuario instructissimo habeat quod domesticis parietibus, vitreis fenestris, aulaeis, peristromatis, tabulis, vasis, signis, anulis sigillariibus, vestimentis, mēsaē, fulcro, armis, gladio, supellectili denique omni, nusquam non, inscribere, et impingere possit: ad hoc scilicet ut usquequaque loquax, et aspectu iucunda sit rerum ad usum communem spectantium facies”. *Emblemata* (Lyon: Bonhomme and Roville, 1550), A2v–A3r. Translation Betty Knott, with facsimile of 1550 *Emblemata* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 2–3. The preface has been ascribed to Bartélemy Aneau, who translated the French 1549 *Emblemata*, or to Roville; see Claudie Balavoine, “Le Classement thématique des emblems d’Alciati: recherche en paternité”, in *The Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe: Tradition and Variety* ed. Alison Adams and Anthony Harper (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1–21. On the Roville and Bonhomme 1548–1551 *Emblemata*, see Henry Green *Andreae Alciati Emblematum Flumen abundans* (Manchester: Brothers, London: Truebner, 1871).

28 Howard and Snodin, *Ornament: A Social History*, 26–8.

as serving painters, goldsmiths and metal workers.²⁹ The *Emblemata* should thus be seen in the context of the rapid diffusion of the ornamental print or printed model book; its first place of publication, Augsburg, was a centre for such production. This enlivening of all surfaces is redolent of *grotesche* and Mannerist decoration; the cartouches which frame the *emblemata* with their curling strapwork and masks also suggest surfaces animated. In such a plethora of lively objects, the unique character of contextual meaning is however submerged as “every piece of equipment, anywhere at all” is emblematically ‘enlivened’.

What we see here is the replacement of the carefully selected and inserted *sententia* with a decorated style; rather as we saw the topics contribute to an ornamental style where each discursive element is viewed as a potential source of figural invention. Like the topics, emblems are linked to the twin themes of *copia* and brevity. Emblems were rearranged topically, according to *loci communes* from Roville’s edition of *Emblemata* (Lyon 1548), and thus shown to provide ornaments for topics; the introduction describes the emblem book as a well-stocked cupboard, “promptuarium instructissimum”.³⁰ The *loci communes*, arguments which can be used anywhere, are linked with the deployment of ornaments in any place. Later theorists of the *impresa*, Giovan Andrea Palazzi and Girolamo Ruscelli, note that Alciati’s emblems encouraged the decorative use of meaningful images instead of meaningless motifs.³¹ Thus the imported artistic term *emblema* used of literary style by Cicero, Alan of

29 Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy*, 201–02, quotes Alciati’s description of the *Emblemata* as epigrams which could provide images for painters, goldsmiths or metal workers: “libellum composui epigrammaton, cui titulum feci *Emblemata* . . . unde pictores, aurifices, fusores id genus conficere possint, quae scuta appellamus et petasis figimus, vel pro insignibus gestamus”. The introductory verses of the *Hécatomographie* (1540), a French collection of a hundred illustrated emblems or “hieroglyphs” from Alciati, recommends their use by decorative artists; see Miedema, “Emblema”, 246.

30 On the topical rearrangement of the *Emblemata*, so that they were presented—and regarded—as a collection of commonplaces, see the introduction of John Manning to the 1996 Scolar Press reprint of Lyon 1550 *Emblemata*, xii–xiii. Robert Klein, “La Theorie de l’expression figurée dans les traités italiens sur les ‘Imprese’, 1555–1612”, in *La forme et l’intelligible, écrits sur la Renaissance et l’art moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 139, notes the interest in topics in treatises on *impresa*; Caburacci wanted a topics of *impresa*.

31 Palazzi, *I discorsi sopra l’Imprese* (Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1575), 59–61; Ruscelli, *Discorso all’intorno all’invenzione dell’imprese* (Venice: G. Ziletti, 1556), 175, stresses that Alciati used the title *Emblemata* to transform decoration of walls and intarsia to contain “some attractive and profitable instruction”.

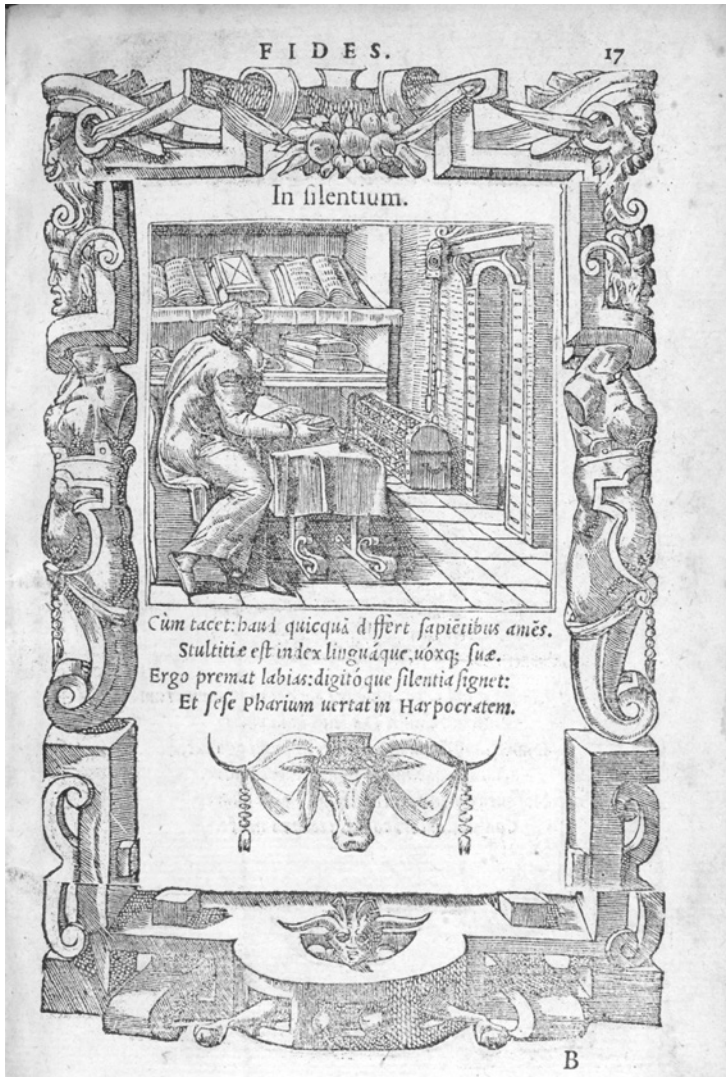


FIGURE 9.1 Alciati, *Emblematum*, Lyon, 1550, sig. Br.

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Lille and the Humanists, returns to visual art with added literary connotations and claims for symbolic meaning unavailable to applied ornamental motifs.

A further topical aspect of emblematic signs lay in their mnemonic deployment, as Théodore de Bèze (Beza) regarded the emblem as a “miniature masonry which brings together splendid elements quarried from diverse places”, suitable for a “memory theatre” for the mind or decoration of an

architectural fabric.³² The windows of Francis Bacon's house at Gothambury were decorated with images of plants and animals as "Topiques for Locall Memory".³³ The fragmentary 'praise' of antiquity becomes a place for storing information. Palazzi notes that emblems can be used in decorations, and to draw "profitable memories".³⁴ Bèze and Palazzi make no distinction between the purely mental mnemonic emblem and its decorative application. In the progression of the *Emblemata* from mosaics to *loci communes* we see the use of topics to order the miscellaneous.

The generalised application recommended by Fasanini and the Lyon 1548 *Emblemata* is paralleled by the growth of attention to the internal structure of the sign. Here we come to its status as 'hieroglyph' and mosaic. For Alberti in *De re aedificatoria* VIII.4, hieroglyphs as pictorial signs are "more universal" than languages, vulnerable to extinction over time. The pseudo-hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia* are interpreted rebus-fashion, as pictograms. Erasmus in more sophisticated terms notes that the hieroglyphs' enigmatic significance is explicated once the meaning of each element and its properties is understood.³⁵

The rebus shares with the hieroglyph the notion that meaning is created 'within' the sign rather than the contextual significance explored in the *Adagia*. The focus on arrangement or interaction between elements within the sign is also stressed by Alciati's choice of the term *emblemata* for his epigrams. An *emblema* is a precious insert or mosaic, specifically the central panel: a mosaic within a mosaic, which could be removed and reworked in another setting. Alciati also likened his paper *Emblemata* to coins, with their combination of figure and motto.³⁶ He spoke of the *emblema* as an epigram in which some-

32 William Engel in "Mnemonic emblems in the Humanist Discourses of Knowledge", in *Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory*, ed. Peter Daly and John Manning, (New York: AMS, 1999), 128.

33 Ibid., 125.

34 Palazzi, *Discorsi*, 61.

35 *Adagia* II.1.1, "Festina lente", in *Opera Omnia* II.3, 11–12. Erasmus illustrates with citation of Aristotle's *Physics* and Pliny as sources for invention of hieroglyphs. On this passage, see Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 207–8: "contrary to the divine intelligence which the reading of hieroglyphs is supposed to foreshadow, the intuitive grasp of them depends on discursive knowledge".

36 The dedication to Conrad Peutinger draws analogies between Peutinger's presentation of precious antique medals to the Emperor Maximilian and Alciati's gift of paper emblems to Peutinger, presents between poets: "At tibi supremus pretiosa nomismata Caesar,/ Et veterum eximias donet habere manus./ Ipse dabo vati chartacea munera vates,/ Quae Chronade mei pignus amoris habe", *Emblemata*, A2v. On the numismatic analogy, see Lippincott, "Genesis", 67, who sees the Humanists' creation of a classical pictorial vocabu-

thing is described so that it indicates something else and envisaged it as a kind of hieroglyph, as he writes in *De verborum et rerum significatione* (1530)

words indicate, things are indicated. However things, too, can sometimes indicate, as for example the hieroglyphics in Horus and Chaeremon; and proceeding from this idea we have written a book in verse with the title *Emblemata*.³⁷

The *emblema* is at once a composite, inlaid decoration similar to an *adagium*, a “hieroglyph” and an epigram providing inventions for images which signify something besides what they represent; the epigram may employ apostrophe or prosopopoeia.³⁸ Each level carries verbal-visual interplay, which became more explicit once the printer of the first edition, Steyner, added illustrations.³⁹ The *emblema* now becomes a figure inserted in a text as well as an epigram to be inscribed on an image.

The preface to the 1548 Lyon *Emblemata* quotes Guillaume Budé’s definition of the *emblema* as mosaic work—a fitting whole made out of small inlaid pieces—alongside a description of the threefold structure of the emblem, comprising a *sententia*, which penetrates the soul with its flashing insight (*argutia*), a verse whose metre charms the ears and an image on which the

lary mirrored in the philologists’ creation of Neolatin texts through the compilation of tropes and images to embody the best classical spirit. In the dedication of the Paris 1534 edition, approved by Alciati, any production of Alciati’s is worthy to be placed with rare, costly things as though in a treasury: “inter κειμήλια, et velut in sanctius aliquod aerarium responendum”, *Emblemata*, A2r.

37 Miedema, “Emblema”, 241–42.

38 Luca Contile, *Ragionamento di Luca Contile sopra la proprietà delle imprese*, 24r, considers *Emblemata* a misnomer for Alciati on the basis that his images are too simple, unlike the multiform representations that he sees as proper to *emblemata*. He includes amongst *emblemata* forms made by chance in the varied colours of marble striation, an echo of the praise for the ‘flowers’ and ‘meadows’ of Byzantine *ekphraseis* on marbles.

39 Saunders, “Alciati”, 10, notes that Steyner spoke of the illustrations as necessary for “ruder” readers. For an overview of the most important European editions, see Daniel Russell, “Emblem”, *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (New York: Scribner, 1999), 11, 65–67. Alciati was displeased with Steyner’s 1531 edition, preferring the illustrated Paris 1534 edition printed by Chrestien Wechel. Arbizzoni, “Ecfrafi”, 526, discusses the 1618 Padua *Emblemata*, which enriched Alciati’s literary antiquarianism with knowledge of visual antiquities.

eyes can feast.⁴⁰ The emblem is a mosaic of three components identified with the ornament of thought, and the two ornaments of speech—rhythm and figure—with the figure translated into an image. The emblem is a mosaic, assembled from diverse parts and applied to a wide variety of things, a symbolic token joined from various pieces into composite unity and a ‘hieroglyph’ whose divulgation is inseparable from its veil.

The ‘mysterious’ character of the hieroglyph, so often invoked and so elusive to the interpreter, becomes a staple in discussion of emblematic signs.⁴¹ This character gathers interest following Ficino’s translation of Horapollo (1463, printed 1471), over forty years after the *Hieroglyphica* was brought to Florence by Cristoforo Buondelmonti.⁴² The fifth century *Hieroglyphica* was, like the *Hermetica*, regarded as a record of the esoteric Egyptian wisdom revered by the Neoplatonists. Plotinus in *Enneads* v.8.6 saw the hieroglyphs as manifesting knowledge of the non-discursive, non-deliberative character of the intelligible; Ficino’s Plotinus commentary stated that the hieroglyphs showed things as God knows them, as a simple form, and that they signified divine mysteries.⁴³

40 “brevem sententiam argutia, quae animum purgit, numerosam versuum suavitatem quae aures mulcet, τῶν εἰκόνων picturam non inanem, quae oculos pascit... Sunt enim Emblemata vermiculata opera ex tessellis insititiis apta et composita, interprete Budaeo, quod et ipsa vocabuli Graeci origo ostendit”, *Emblemata*, Azv–A3r. The first French translation of Alciati, by Jehan le Fèvre (Paris: Wechel, 1536), speaks of “Les Emblemes, ou les Marqueteures”; Aneau’s 1549 French translation speaks of them as “bigarrés de petites pièces de marqueterie” (“parti-coloured with little pieces of marquetry”) and refers to Budé (quoted in Balavoine, “Classement”, 3). Budé’s discussion of *emblemata*, from his annotations to the *Pandects*, is also noted by Contile, *Ragionamento*, 24v, Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Delle imprese trattato* (Naples, Giovanni Carlino and Antonio Pace, 1592), 2v–3r and Palazzi, *Discorsi*, 59, 61 who translates the passage on the threefold action of the *imprese*. Palazzi, *ibid.*, and Contile, *Ragionamento*, 24r–24v, refer to mosaic and intarsia.

41 Wind remarks that Valeriano in the *Hieroglyphica* “evad[es] the divine splendour he professes to worship”, *Pagan Mysteries*, 13.

42 The manuscript came to Florence in 1422 or (according to Lippincott) in 1419; the Greek text was printed by Aldus in 1505. See Karl Giehlow, “Die Hieroglyphenkunde des Humanismus in der Allegorie der Renaissance”, *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 32 (1915), 1–218; Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, repr. 1993), 44–56, 64–87 on Greek accounts of the hieroglyphs and the Roman obelisks.

43 Ficino, *Opera* 11, 1768: “Deus scientiam habet non tamquam excogitationem de re multiplicem, sed tamquam simplicem firmamque rei formam”. Tacitus spoke of the hieroglyphs as “thought symbols” which could not be read by the profane; see Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 110.

For ancient writers engaged with theurgy, such as Iamblichus or Apuleius (long believed to be the author of the *Asclepius*) or the author of Libellus XVI of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the hieroglyphs were talismanic. In *De mysteriis* VII.4–5, Iamblichus spoke of the magical, creative force of hieroglyphs, which contain in themselves the knowledge and essence of the gods, being closely linked with the nature of beings, while *Corpus Hermeticum* XVI.2 contrasts Greek unfavourably with the force of Egyptian words which have the actuality (*energeia*) of the things of which they speak.

This venerable 'Hermetic' pedigree and Horapollo's propitious name appears to have diverted attention from the jejune allegories of the *Hieroglyphica*.⁴⁴ The magical character claimed for hieroglyphs offered parallels with the Cabbalistic understanding of language as operational, studied by Christian scholars (notably Pico) from the late fifteenth century.⁴⁵ In each case an oriental language was claimed to work in a talismanic or magical way, distinct from the logocentric character of Greek (or Latin), derided by the Hermetic "Thoth" as bound by its artificial logic of signification and unable to reflect or contain the essence of things.⁴⁶

44 Lelio Giraldi (Lilius Gyraldus) identified 'Horapollo' with Horus son of Isis whom Plutarch said corresponded to Apollo. The work of such an author must surely contain sacred meaning "pertaining to the occult interpretation of things and nature" "ad occultam rerum interpretationem et naturae pertinere credebatur", *Historiae Deorum Syntagma*, in *Opera*, 226–7. Giraldi also wrote a *Symbolorum Pythagorae Interpretatio* and *Pythagorica praecepta mystica a Plutarcho interpretata* (1539). Other 'Egyptian' treatises include Celio Calcagnini's *De rebus aegyptiis*, a version of Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*. Crinito in *De honesta disciplina* repeatedly mentions hieroglyphs and Egyptian antiquities or religion; see inter alia VII.2, VIII.2, IX.5, XVI.2, XX.4, XXIV.16. Iversen, *Myth of Egypt*, 61, notes 22 editions of Ficino's Hermetic translations between 1471 and 1641. For early allusions to 'hieroglyphs' and 'Egyptian' references, see Brian Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007); Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); Cameron, *Mysteriously Meant*; Bavarese and Gareffi, *Letteratura delle immagini*; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*.

45 For the operational character of the Cabala, see the condemned and reformulated proposition v.26 of Pico's *Conclusiones nongentae*, ed. Albano Biondi (Florence: Olschki, 1995), 147. Wind remarks on Pico's lack of interest in hieroglyphs, *Pagan Mysteries*, 279–80. Cameron, *Mysteriously Meant*, 108–9 notes Origen's comments on Moses as discoverer of hieroglyphs, who spoke language of a twofold meaning.

46 The success of Annius of Viterbo, with his bogus transcriptions of "Chaldean" and "Etruscan" and his 'interpretation' of the "Osiris" memorial, a concoction of two profile heads and a medieval lunette carved with a tree, birds and lizard, reflects the fascination with mysterious oriental languages. On Annius and his *Antiquitatum varium volumina*

The hieroglyphs offered various avenues of interpretation—as well as a means of repackaging symbolism inherited from fables, bestiary and nature lore. Theurgic views of hieroglyphs could see them as operational due to likeness or proportion to their referents, like the Egyptian statues described in *Asclepius* 37, whose proportions were so perfect that they were animated by the spirit of the gods which they depicted.⁴⁷ The basis and working of such spiritual magic was described at length by Ficino in *De vita* III, with its lists of the colours, plants, stones, fragrances, music and song which could channel spiritual influence. Without this magical element, “hieroglyphs” become metaphors based on likeness, as catalogued exhaustively in Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphica*.⁴⁸ Alternatively, the operational character of things could lie in dissimilarity, as Proclus describes symbolic representation, which acts according to a “daemonic action” that carries the reader from grotesque outer form, like the dung beetles and scarabs of the *Hieroglyphica*, to transcendent truth.⁴⁹

Emblem and Impresa

The general applicability of emblems, which made them a kind of *locus communis*, led to their distinction from *impresa*, consisting of figure and motto.⁵⁰

xvii (1498), see Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*, 121; Paola Mattinageli, *Annio da Viterbo: documenti e ricerche*, 1 (Rome: C.N.R., 1981). Anniius’ influence appears in the decorations of the Vatican Borgia apartments, which depict “Hermes Trismegistus” and identify the symbols of the Egyptian gods with Borgia devices.

47 Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tale* v.3, where the ‘statue’ of Hermione is ‘brought to life’ as music sounds, alludes to the power of spiritual magic to move and animate proportionate things. The presence of music signals its role as the privileged medium for the channeling of spirit into artificial forms, as described by Ficino in *De vita* III.21.

48 Valeriano is much used by Ripa, who states that the teaching of his images came first from “Dottrina Egittia”, *Iconologia*, Preface, b3r.

49 Proclus, *Commentary on Republic*, Part 2, Book 1, Chapter 2, 85.26–86.23, discussed in Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, 50–60.

50 Apart from the *Emblemata* of Alciati and the *Symbolicae Quaestiones* of Achille Bocchi (1555, repr. Bologna: Apud Societatem Typographiae Bononiensis, 1574), treatises on the *impresa* flourished more in Italy prior to the Jesuit use of emblems in the *Ratio studiorum*. See Denis Drysdall, “The Emblem according to the Italian *Impresa* Theorists”, in *Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe*, 22–32. Italian literature on the *impresa* regards it as more serious and more particular than the emblem, since the *impresa* responded to a unique situation, like the disclosure of a lover’s sentiments to a beloved, rather than the “universal” lesson of the emblem. See Girolamo Ruscelli, *Discorso intorno all’invenzioni dell’Imprese* (1556), discussed in *Letteratura delle immagini*, 157. Tesauo contrasts the

Paolo Giovio derived the *impresa* from the *emprise*, the vow binding knight to lord in French chivalry, imitated in the pseudo-heraldic conventions of courtly love in fifteenth century France with the use of rebuses and motifs intelligible only to the lovers.⁵¹ The *impresa* thus defines a moral attitude (action or intention), whereas the *emblema* denotes an artistic structure (mosaic or inset). Contile contrasts the “virtuosi disegni” (e.g. the desire to win fame) in *imprese* with medals as tokens of praise which commemorate things accomplished.⁵²

The Italian sixteenth century treatises on *imprese* elaborate reflections on composition and invention to the point that they develop emblem and device theory into a field in itself, thereby obscuring questions of insertion.⁵³ What is shared by competing conceptions of the *impresa* as hieroglyph, as poem or as enthymeme is the discovery of resemblance.⁵⁴ The poetry most associated with the *impresa* is that of Petrarch, whom Contile regards as father of the

emblem as a “simbolo vulgare”, with the *impresa* as “la più sublime e ingegnosa di tutte le maniere simboliche”, *Cannocchiale*, 634, 734.

- 51 See Lipincott, “Genesis”, 62. Scipione Bargagli in *Dialogo de'guochi* (1572) denies the French military origin of the *impresa*. The jousts of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici in 1469 and 1475 were occasions for display of such lovers' devices. See *Le tems revient -l' tempo si rinnova Feste e spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. Paola Ventrone (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992), 167–205.
- 52 See Contile, *Ragionamento* 24v, 27v, 29v, 32r. Contile calls military insignia an “honorable e immortale spettacolo” (ibid., 11r). Ruscelli, *Discorso all'intorno all'invenzione dell'impresa* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1556), appended to an edition of Giovio, calls the *impresa* a mirror where one can see the intention of the maker (*Discorso*, excerpted SAC III, 2769); Tasso, *Il Conte* in *Dialoghi* ed. Ezio Raimondi, 11.2 (Florence: Sansoni, 1958), 1051, notes the *impresa* concerns the future more than other times.
- 53 On treatises on the *impresa*, see Caldwell, *Italian Impresa*; Guido Arbizzoni, “Le imprese come ritratto dell'anima” in *Tra parole e immagine* ed. Luciana Gentile and Patrizia Oppici (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2003), 33–42; idem, *Un nodo di parole e di cose: storia e forma delle imprese* (Rome: Salerno, 2002); Robert Klein, “Les traités”; Armando Maggi, *Identità e impresa rinascimentale* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998); Gombrich, “*Icones Symbolicae: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought*”, *JWCI* 11 (1948), 163–192, on the absorption and decline of symbolic images in Baroque art.
- 54 Renaissance writers often mix claims for the *impresa* as syllogism and symbol (Ammirato, Contile). For modern distinctions between ‘Neoplatonic’ and ‘Aristotelian’ approaches, see Caldwell, *Italian Impresa*; Michael Bath, review of Caldwell, *Italian Impresa*, in *Modern Language Review*, 101, 3 (July 2006); Klein, “La Theorie”. The *impresa* is treated as a species of poem by Ammirato, Scipione Bargagli, Palazzi, and Torquato Tasso; Andrea Chiocco, *Discorso della natura delle imprese et del vero modo di formarle* (Verona, 1601, excerpted SAC III, 2844) discusses it in terms of Aristotle's characterisation of poetry as wondrous yet credible. On the motto of the *impresa* as a *sententia* and the *sententia* as an enthymeme, see Contile, *Ragionamento*, 33r–35r; Ammirato, *Il Rota overo dell'impresa*

genre in its post-antique or chivalric guise.⁵⁵ The Petrarchan association signals another link with topoi and topics, and *concettismo* will later be identified with lyric poetry.⁵⁶ The attention given to the metaphoric core of the *impresa* means that they become regarded as exemplary figures, or central to a range of spectrum of metaphoric, composite signs which range from ephemeral devices to sacred hieroglyphs and the things of creation.⁵⁷ Contile and Alessandro Farra organise their treatises according to the kinds of figurative signs, their species and properties: Contile has “insegne”, “arme delle casate”, “divise”, “livree”, “foggie”, “emblemì”, “riversi delle medaglie”, “cifere”, “hieroglyphici”.⁵⁸ The esoterically inclined Farra in *Settenario dell' umana riduzione* (1571) links “Cabalistic mysteries”, hieroglyphs, “Orphic theology”, Pythagorean numerology or symbols, Platonic discourses, wreaths, coins, colours and liveries, arms and bearings as varieties of *filosofia simbolica* whose privileged forms are *imprese* and which assist the soul to raise itself to divine contemplation.⁵⁹ Farra, an admirer of Camillo, may have been influenced by the conflation of images deployed as pictograms or ‘hieroglyphs’, ‘Cabala’, alchemy, topics and mnemonics in Camillo’s memory theatre.⁶⁰

(Naples: Giovanni Maria Scotto, 1562), 14, terms the ‘soul’ and ‘body’ as the major and minor propositions which together form a conclusion.

55 Contile, *Ragionamento*, IIv.

56 See below on Camillo Pellegrino.

57 On the metaphoric significance created by the relation of word and image, Ercole Tasso, *Della realtà et perfettione delle imprese* (Bergamo, 1612, excerpted SAC III, 2861) insists that the meaning must come from the mutual relation of figure and motto, while Ruscelli and Bartolemeo Taegio, *Il Linceo* (Milan, 1571) argue that they should be meaningless separated.

58 Contile, *Ragionamento*, 2v. Contile, *Ragionamento*, 24v, includes as a species of emblem a *giornea*, a multi-coloured silk costume.

59 Alessandro Farra, *Settenario dell' umana riduzione* (Venice: appresso la Minima Compagnia, 1594), b4v. Farra also refers to the Cabalistic divine names as *imprese*. Contile’s *Ragionamento*, which cites Farra, has consecutive chapters on “Cifri”, which Contile claims are Hebrew in origin, and hieroglyphs. Amongst the few critical discussions of Farra, see Maggi, *Identità*. Links between *imprese* and Cabala appear also in Taegio in *Il linceo*, Book 2, 3v–4r and Ercole Tasso, *Virginia* (Bergamo: Martini, 1593) with its “Rime, Imprese e dimostrazioni Cabalistiche”—possibly following Maurice Scève in *Delie* (1544). Michael Maier’s alchemical emblem book, *Atalanta fugiens* (Oppenheim, 1617), combined emblems with madrigals to give a further dimension to the composite art which veils and divulges through symbolic correspondences and insights.

60 Farra’s first seven steps to God (culminating with *filosofia simbolica*) echo in content and name the stages of Camillo’s theatre.

Girolamo Ruscelli in *Le imprese illustri* (1584) envisages the application of *imprese* to all kinds of objects, and treats Greek epigrams, hieroglyphs, medals, figurative art, symbols of the evangelists and the ornament of the Ark of Tabernacles all as figurative signs. He suggests that the heavens and constellations themselves might be seen as figures; the lack of distinction between applied ornaments and objects of creation is striking.⁶¹ Contile similarly lists the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the rainbow after the Flood as divine *imprese*.⁶² In Ruscelli's view of the stars as *imprese* the 'ornaments' of creation are now conceived in emblematic terms, as exemplars of divine *ingenium*.⁶³ This theme culminates with the Tesauro's celebration of all creation as figures of divine 'wit' in the *Cannocchiale aristotelico* (1654), using the spyglass (*cannocchiale*) of the title to scan the world for signs of *ingegno*.⁶⁴ *Impresa* theorists such as Tasso in *Il Conte* and Capaccio provide inventories of creation from which devices can be drawn; topics provides the means for the "discovery" of ingenious comparisons in the *ornatus mundi*.⁶⁵

61 Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri del signor Ieronimo Ruscelli* (Venice: Francesco dei Franceschi, 1584), 3–4.

62 Contile, *Ragionamento*, 31v. Contile's other examples of sacred *imprese* include the *agnus dei* and the eagle of John, whose "motto" is the opening of Gospel of John (ibid., 38v–39r). Contile rehearses Annius of Viterbo's Noah-Janus identification to claim Noah as the human inventor of *imprese* (ibid., 30v).

63 Contile, ibid., 32v, compares mottoes (which can be *sententiae*, proverbs, questions, precepts or enigmas) to spring flowers, meadows and stars in the sky.

64 Tesauro specifies that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is his spyglass, a "limpidissimo cannocchiale", *Cannocchiale*, 2–3. In an egregiously conceited example of such ingenuity, Erycius Putaneus in 1617 showed the line "Tot tibi sunt dotes, Virgo, quot sidera caelo" could be read 1002 different ways, as many as the stars then known. Cited in Praz, *Studies*, 20, who recalls Addison's discussion in *Spectator* 60 of Putaneus' demonstration as an instance of false wit.

65 Klein, "Les Traités", 139; Book 2 of Capaccio's *Delle imprese trattato* catalogues the figurative meanings of animals, plants and body parts; Tasso, *Il Conte*, 1062–1116, catalogues planets, stars, creatures plants, monsters and artefacts, giving topical sources for forming *imprese* (ibid., 1082). Farra, *Settenario*, 473, notes that the *imprese* and their 'proportions' are drawn from the topics (*fonti topici*). Tesauro frequently uses topical epitomes in setting out his arguments, as at *Cannocchiale*, 304, which shows the "Eight species of metaphor". Praz, *Studies*, 574, cites the Jesuit Menestrier in *La Philosophie des Images*, 1682, 77–78, on theses in logic defended at Todi in 1620, with each proposition illustrated by a device explicated with verses.

Given the celebration of creation as divine *impresa*, it is not surprising that multi-level allegory inherited from medieval poetics and typology is restated in treatises and emblem books; Contile speaks of *imprese*, like other figures, as interpreted “allegorically, morally, historically and divinely”.⁶⁶ Achille Bocchi’s *Symbolicae Quaestiones* (1574) divides its emblems into “theological”, “moral”, “physical” and “philological”—where the ‘philological’ replaces the ‘allegorical’ of fourfold exegesis.⁶⁷ Tesauro will celebrate the anagogic, allegorical and tropological *argutie* found in all creation—angelic, animal, natural and human.⁶⁸ The creation-figure analogies in the *impresa* literature project onto their objects the complexity of the structure of the sign.

Microcosmic Imprese

The capacity to carry a range of figurative meanings, from the ephemeral to the ‘mystical’, lies in the insistence on the composite structure, with its elements of image, word and thought. In Paolo Giovio’s *Dialogo dell’imprese militari et amorose* (1556), these elements are termed ‘body’ and ‘soul’.⁶⁹ Giovio’s analogy replaces ‘mosaic’ figures with the allegorising of a semantic structure as microcosm. Giovio’s emphasis on the proportion of figure and the motto, or ‘body’ and ‘soul’ also signals a Scholastic-Aristotelian conception of the composite nature of human being. Aquinas remarks in the *Commentary on De anima* 1.9 that proportion is not an attribute of substantial form but *is* the relation between form and matter; if matter is not disposed, form will disappear. The

66 Contile, *Ragionamento*, 30r. Arbizzoni, “Ecfraisi”, 523, notes the growth of exegetical material on Alciati; the 1621 Padua *Emblemata* edited by Tozzi ran to 1003 pages. On commented editions of Alciati, see Green, *Alciati*, 91–94. Peter Daly, *Emblem Theory. Recent German Contributions to the Characterisation of the Emblem Genre* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: KTO Press, 1979), 80–82, 92, 94–5, distinguishes typological, hieroglyphic and allegorical emblems.

67 On Bocchi, see Elizabeth See Watson *Achille Bocchi and the Emblem Book as Symbolic Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For an illustration of the way that *imprese* could form a figurative integument to a sacred narrative, see Diana Galis, “Concealed Wisdom: Renaissance Hieroglyphic and Lorenzo Lotto’s Bergamo Intarsie”, *Art Bulletin*, 62, 3 (Sep., 1980), 363–75, where the concealment is allegorical and literal—the *imprese* appear on the covers of the choir stalls showing biblical scenes.

68 Tesauro, *Cannocchiale*, 59–62.

69 Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell’imprese* (repr. New York: Garland, 1979). For the printing history and reception, see Caldwell, *Italian Impresa*. We are concerned here with the *impresa* in the context of ornament and therefore do not follow the intricacies of the treatises; for detail, see the works of Caldwell, Bavarese-Gareffi, Arbizzoni and, especially, Klein, plus the treatises excerpted in SAC III. Giovio was friendly with Alciati.

combination of Scholastic allusion plus semantic allegory in treatises on the *impresa* reflects the development of a broadly Aristotelian art theory by the mid-Cinquecento.

Giovio's body-soul analogy persists through literature on *imprese*, leading to numerous reflections on the word-image conjunction as comparable to the human composite, to the place of humans in the chain of being, and on correspondences with the Aristotelian levels of soul.⁷⁰ There are also discussions as to what constitutes the 'soul': the motto, the comparison or the *concetto* which is embodied by the word-image composite.⁷¹ Farra uses a four part scheme reminiscent of Ficino's *Theologia Platonica* to parallel the conjunction of mind, rational soul and body with that of *concetto*, motto and image.⁷² For Farra, the perfection of the *impresa* lies in its similarity to man, its author; as all parts of human being are directed to the mind, so all parts of the *impresa* are directed to the *concetto*, and reflect the ascent from the multiplicity of the material to intellectual unity.⁷³

Scipione Ammirato in *Il Rota overo dell'impresa* (1562) defines the *impresa* as "a signification of our mind through a knot [*nodo*] of words and things".⁷⁴ Ammirato sees this *nodo* as analogous to the "great miracle", man, made from the

70 Contile speaks of vegetative and animal souls; Tasso, *Il conte*, 1060, claims the *impresa* has two souls, comparison and the motto. For Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri*, 4, the intention is the soul of the *impresa*; if the motto were considered the 'soul' of the *impresa* then devices without mottoes, like those used in antiquity, would be like cadavers or aborted embryos.

71 The 'soul' of the *impresa*, for Giovio the motto, in later writers becomes the comparison; see Contile, *Ragionamento*, 30r; Scipione Bargagli, *La prima parte dell'impresa* (Siena, 1578), excerpted SAC III, 2808, 2810, on the expression of *concetto* which gives the *impresa* its spirit and essence. Palazzi, Bargagli and Taegio call the *impresa* the expression, figuring or image of a *concetto*. For Torquato Tasso, the figure and motto both express the *concetto*. Chiocco, *Discorso*, 2844, says that the body of the *impresa*, which shows an allegory through the agent-patient relation, shows the *concetto*. Grácan in his 'anatomy of wit', *Agudeza*, defines the *concetto* as an "act of the intellect which expresses the correspondence that can be created between objects"; this "artificial correlation" will show "subtle relations". Grácan says *concetti* are not just any similitudes but those which show mystery, contrast, correspondence, disproportion or *sententia*—what he calls the "lymph of subtlety", *L'Acutezza e l'Arte dell'Ingegno* trans. Giulia Poggia (Palermo: Aesthetica, 1986), 37, 71.

72 Farra, *Settenario*, 471. Cf. Ficino's ontological hierarchy of God, angel, rational soul, quality and matter in *Theologia Platonica* I.1 and III.1.

73 *Settenario*, 462.

74 "una significazione della mente nostra sotto un nodo di parole e di cose", Ammirato, *Il Rota*, 10.

conjunction of irrational animal and angelic intellect.⁷⁵ The body-soul relation is not only a proportional composite, but a source of wonder (*meraviglia*) as two entities come together to produce a third, new thing.⁷⁶ The *meraviglia* central to late Renaissance poetics is linked here to the Hermetic celebrations of man as “great wonder”, conjoined from animal and divine natures and alone capable of ranging through the universe, as invoked by Pico in his *Oration*.⁷⁷

The celebration of the unique, “wondrous” human ability to range through all creation reappears in praise of metaphor in Contile’s *Ragionamento*: “by means of likenesses, man may join and embrace all earthly and divine things”.⁷⁸ If the conjunction of body and soul in the *impresa* discloses the condition of human being, this disclosure is inseparable from the metaphoric and the marvellous. Metaphor moves from being a veil or *integumentum* to being a mode of perception, a ‘spyglass’ as Tesauro would say. Robert Klein remarked that despite the differing approaches to the *impresa* by theorists concerned with the logical status of the concept and artists interested in rules for motto-figure interactions, the centrality of the *concetto* based on a creative act of *ingegno* reduced all art to metaphor.⁷⁹ Tesauro would assert that metaphor discovers “un teatro pien di meraviglie”.⁸⁰ In a theory of art where everything is metaphor, the distinction between ornament and non-ornament breaks down: either everything is ornament or there is no longer ornament.

75 Ammirato, *ibid.*, 32.

76 Ammirato, *ibid.*, 31–32: “the marvellous consists in the conjunction of two intelligible things, so that they constitute a third, which is neither one nor the other, but a mixture, which in this way generates wonder”, “la meraviglia consiste nell’accoppiamento di due cose intelligibili, le quali, per cagion che costituiscono un terzo, che non è né l’uno né l’altro delle due cose, ma un misto, quindi è che si generi la meraviglia”.

77 Hermetic *Asclepius* VI.1, quoted in Pico’s *Oratio*. Pico describes magic as a similar conjoining of earthly and heavenly: “as the farmer weds elms to the vines, so the Magus weds earth to heaven, in other words the lower things to the gifts and virtues of the things above”; “sicut agricola ulmos vitibus, ita Magus terram caelo, idest inferiora superiorum dotibus virtutibusque maritat”, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, ed. Garin (1942, repr. Pordenone: Tesi, 1994), 66.

78 “l’huomo per le similitudini, con tutte le cose terrene e divine s’annodi e s’abbracci”, Contile, *Ragionamento*, 27v.

79 Robert Klein, “Les traités”, 145. Cf. Bargagli: “l’impresa non è . . . altro in sostanza certamente che metafora”, SAC III, 2811; Bargagli also describes comparison as the “forma essenziale” of the *impresa*, which gives it ‘life’ (*ibid.*, 2808, 2810). Erasmus celebrates metaphor as source of the dignity of speech, which alone amongst figures adds everything in fuller measure; see *Parabolae* in *Opera omnia* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1975), I.5, 88.

80 Tesauro, *Cannocchiale*, 267.

Although Tesauro's *Cannocchiale aristotelico* lies beyond the historical limits of this book, it merits mention because it attempts a unified theory of the arts based on the central role of ornament.⁸¹ The *Cannocchiale* discovers all of nature and artifice as a series of devices which represent the *concetti* of God and man.⁸² Tesauro even identifies the *kosmos-kosmiotēs* relation as the genus of witty insights: "il nostro Autore [Aristotle] . . . chaimò tutto il Genere delle Argutezze, COSMON, E COSMIOTIN: che gli'interpreti latinamente han tradotto *Concinnitatem, e Ornatum*".⁸³ Tesauro's taxonomy of all things as varieties of *ingegno* illustrates how the focus on figurative structure in emblematics views different kinds, media and scale as diversifications of a single form of invention.⁸⁴ The categories of predication become accidental to the essential unity constituted by 'ingenious' metaphoric invention. Tesauro's "spyglass" indifferently roams the universal order and the works of artifice, seeking only the correspondences which reiterate the same message that all things are in correspondence, because all are metaphorically related.

Tesauro's universe of reiterated conceits where the structure of artifice replaces ontology illustrates how the *imprese* become exemplary structures for other kinds of artifice, as Bargagli calls them "the best structured and most complex kind of writing".⁸⁵ Palazzi draws analogies between poetic *meraviglia*, created from the mixing of true and false, the tempered mixing of contrary qualities in the *impresa* and musical temperament, which gives

81 See J.A. Mazzeo, "Metaphysical Poetry and the Poetic of Correspondence", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1953), 221–34. Mazzeo notes Tesauro's influence on Vico. See Maria Doglio, "Emanuele Tesauro e la parola che crea: metafora e potere della scrittura", *Cannocchiale*, 7–17, on the place of the work in Tesauro's *oeuvre*. Tesauro's *Cannocchiale* has its counterpart in his *Inscriptiones* (1666), his collection of epigraphs, encomia, coins, *imprese*, mottoes, triumphal inventions, trophies, iconographic programmes for various sorts of decorations, in celebration of royal power. Tesauro was a Jesuit, although he left the Society in 1634.

82 Tesauro, *Cannocchiale*, 73, calls flowers "Figure eleganti e vivaci Argutie dell'ingegnosa Natura". God is described as a poet, an "arguto favellatore: motteggiando agli huomini e agli angeli, con varie Imprese heroiche, e simboli figurati, gli altissimi suoi concetti" (*ibid.*, 59).

83 *Ibid.*, 4.

84 For philosophical discussions of *ingenium* in Aristotle and Avicenna, see Summers, *Judgment*, 99–101. Summers notes the subtlety attributed to *ingegno* as derived from the subtlety of the material intellect. Both Tesauro and Gracian pair *ingegno* and prudence as operations which involve comparison and judgement; Gracian wrote a manual on prudence, *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647), which forms a pendant to *Agudeza*.

85 Klein, "Les traités", 132.

“soavissim’armonia”.⁸⁶ We talked above about patterning as the conjunction of opposites or contraries; the *impresa* reiterates such conjunctions, presenting them in the form of a metaphorical insight. If the *impresa* becomes a new means of revealing the *exornatio mundi*, it suggests a movement from species to the ‘wondrous’, an interest reflected in the *Wunderkammer* with its tension between taxonomy and ‘marvel’.⁸⁷ While *ornatus mundi* concerned species, the unique insight of ingenious figures pertains to the particular. The kind of continuity revealed by the figural continuum does not however distinguish between fragment and deep structure or the trivial and the profound, a point obvious in Tesauro and lamented by Tasso in *Il Conte overo de l’Imprese* (1594). *Il Conte* is staged overlooking the ancient obelisk newly erected before the Lateran Basilica, Christianity’s triumphal accommodation of the symbolic mysteries of the ancients. This becomes the scene for a critique of the lazy thinking promoted by the vogue for *impresa* which has established bogus connections between banal pseudo-‘hieroglyphs’ and theological symbols and careless identification of the ‘body-soul’ pairing with the Aristotelian form-matter relation. The abuse and trivializing of allegory occur as an overly elaborate model of signification loses proportion with the communicative capacity of the pictorial sign. Tasso argues that the question of symbolic meaning should be taken back to a serious origin with pseudo-Dionysius and refutes Giovio’s proportion

86 Palazzi, *Discorsi*, excerpted SAC III, 2804. Palazzi’s description of musical temperament correctly discusses qualitative, rather than quantitative proportion: sweet and harsh, acute and grave. Corresponding poetic wonder lies in the mixture of false and true to create the marvellous yet credible; in the *impresa* the mixed contraries are clarity and obscurity, false and true, humble with proud, hard with soft, possible with impossible.

87 See inter alia Bredekamp, *Lure of antiquity*, who comments also on the ruin as intermediary between the human and nature; Lugli, *Naturalia et Mirabili*; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); on the *studiolo*, Wolfgang Liebenwein, *Studiolo: Storia e tipologia di uno spazio culturale* (Modena: Panini, 1988); Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D’Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). Lugli, *Naturalia*, 69, comments on the collection as a kind of unmediated access to the *exornatio mundi* which could be infinitely ordered and administered: “Il mecenate-collzionista ha di fronte a sé, finalmente senza intermediari, tutta ‘l’exornatio mundi’ con le sue infinite possibilità di meraviglie pronte per essere ordinate et amministrate”. Lugli notes the hexaemeral arrangement of mnemonic treatises such as Citolini’s *Tipocosmia* and Cosimo Rosselli’s *Thesaurus artificiosae memoriae*.

of body and soul. For Tasso, proportion pertains only to the parts of the body and body and soul do not co-exist in measure but in tragic disjunction.⁸⁸

In Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, grave matters may be represented by seemingly frivolous things. The 'courtly' character of the *impresa* is reiterated, in their chivalric origins and their identity as "courtly philosophy" ("filosofia del cavaliere").⁸⁹ This courtly character may also be linked to the theme of superficiality lamented by Tasso and mocked by Doni in his ironic view of *impresa* as a "materiuola bassa" discussed with false solemnity as though it were a complex and profound matter.⁹⁰ Doni's *Pitture*, a "theatre" of symbolic inventions however shows how emblematics had influenced allegory by the mid Cinquecento. Doni's dense figurations, some derived from Camillo, are conceived as mnemonic images which endure in the reader's mind, where they are placed within 'theatres' or 'galleries'.⁹¹

Klein viewed the rise of *concettismo* alongside the development of *disegno* in late Renaissance art theory, especially in the Aristotelian theory of Zuccari.⁹² He sees the *concetto* as a development from the intelligible species, an argument substantiated by the first literary treatise on the *concetto*, *Il concetto poetico* of Camillo Pellegrino (c. 1598). Pellegrino opens with discussion of the universal concept, which is 'conceived' in the mind on its reception of the intelligible species.⁹³ The poetic *concetto* is conceived in an analogous manner, but considers similitudes or resemblances and is 'born' in the fantasy.⁹⁴

88 *Il Conte*, 1120–21.

89 Ammirato, *Il Rota*, excerpted SAC III, 2775.

90 Anton Francesco Doni, *Nuova openione sopra le imprese amoroze e militari* (Venice: Giolito, 1558), excerpted in SAC III, 2785–2792. Doni attacks the *impresa* theorists in their own 'hieroglyphic' language, asking if they want to make insects grow into elephants (ibid., 2790).

91 Doni, *Pitture* (Padua: Grazioso Percaccino, 1564). On the mnemonic character of the *Pitture*, see Bolzoni, *Stanza*, 203–9, who details Federico Zuccari's use of Doni's inventions in the Villa D'Este, Tivoli. Doni's allegory of Fortune seated on an ostrich in *Pitture* corresponds to an image used by Camillo, as related by Toscanella, *Bellezze del Furioso*, glossing OF VIII.62; see Chapter 6.

92 See Klein, "La Theorie", 131, on the changing philosophical background of the *impresa* as *concettismo* develops.

93 *Dialogo di Camillo Pellegrino del Concetto Poetico* in Giovanni Valletta ed. *I Dialoghi e le Rime di Camillo Pellegrino* (Florence: G. D'Anna, 1971), 68. The dialogue features the poet Marino.

94 "un pensamento dell'Intelletto, imagine e somiglianza di cose vere e simili al vero, formato nella fantasia", *Concetto Poetico*, 69. Pellegrino associates the *concetto* particularly with lyric poetry, as the *mythos* is 'soul' of epic.

(The metaphoric insights of the *ingegno* are described by Tesauro and Gráician as joining or separating, increasing and diminishing—activities traditionally ascribed to the combinatory imagination.)⁹⁵

Pellegrino's account is reminiscent of Vasari's account of *disegno* as the formation of a universal concept in the artist's 'idea' (fantasy).⁹⁶ The closeness of Vasari and Pellegrino shows the development of what could be called figural theory, in which, as Klein says, figures are the products of thought and represent its articulation.⁹⁷ The figural in the sense of the mental image, the fantasy and the symbolic have become conflated or treated as analogies for one another. Klein's association of the *concetto* with *disegno* is most suggestive when we turn to deployment of *imprese*.

Imprese and Decorative Cycles

We might see the decorative character of emblematic figures at two levels: in the notion of a decoration as a composite of epigraphic and figurative elements, and more narrowly in the device as assemblage of 'hieroglyphic' image and framing cartouche.⁹⁸ Emblematic figures are also images whose significance lies in being shown—in his treatise on the *imprese*, Francesco Carburici distinguished between signification, imitation or representation and showing; the last is proper to poetry, as it is to figurative art, since poetry is essentially a *figura*.⁹⁹ For Carburici, showing takes place when a *concetto* is manifested indirectly by another object, and becomes a *figura*; display entails metaphor. Carburici's comments are illuminating for the triumphal-emblematic decora-

95 Tesauro, *Cannocchiale*, 82; Gráician, *Agudeza*, 14. This metaphoric activity is the second operation of *ingegno* and is termed by Tesauro *versabilità*. The first operation, *perspicacia*, consists in the analysis and predication of things under the topical headings we have seen in Aristotle and Cicero. Hardison, *Enduring Monument*, 13–18, sees Tesauro's claims for metaphor as descending from the "imaginative syllogism" as the device of poetry, in Gundissalinus' rendering in *On the Division of Philosophy* (c. 1150) of Al-farabi's *Catalogue of Sciences*. On Al-farabi's *Catalogue* in medieval poetics, see also Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, 280–83.

96 See Chapter 7; Pellegrino similarly speaks of an "idea or model in the mind" of the artificer, which he calls the poetic *concetto* (*Concetto Poetico*, 72). The *concetto* is also called soul and form of the poem; the formal character is likened to light shining through a diaphanous material (the speech or *locuzione*) and thus informing it.

97 Klein, "Les traités", 136.

98 On image and cartouche, see Chapter 10.

99 Klein, "Les traités", 132.

tive cycles of the Farnese and Medici which amplify *conchetti* throughout suites of rooms, palaces or even urban topographies.¹⁰⁰ This association of emblematics and triumphs persists in seventeenth century accounts of *imprese*, like Tesauro's *Cannocchiale*.

Prior to these decorations, in Botticelli's *Calumny of Apelles* (c. 1494) the ornamental registers of a decoration form a contextual configuration which illuminate and comment on a central narrative—not unlike Erasmus' discussions of the *Adagia*. The *Calumny* involves a two-level *ekphrasis* (Lucian and Alberti).¹⁰¹ The allegorical fable, depicting the *agon* between praise and blame, is staged in a throne room whose ostentatious architecture frames the pageant of richly robed vices that contrast with the ragged or stark virtues of Naked Truth and Penitence. The two walls depicted show a niche where Midas is enthroned and an arcade which shares the triple openings and rich decoration of a triumphal arch; these features are luxuriously decorated with statues and metal relief panels (*emblemata*) adorning the pedestal bases, friezes, vaults and piers.¹⁰² The reliefs provide a plethora of fables and analogies to the central scene; they articulate the background of meaning as a mosaic of variety and allusion which illuminates a given situation.¹⁰³ Interpretation becomes a process in which the principal action is read in relation to the accumulated contextual meanings, which impinge on the central scene and influence one

100 On the triumph as a *conchetto*, see Starn and Partridge, *Arts of Power*, 162.

101 Fabio Segni, son of Antonio Segni for whom Botticelli painted the work, appended an epigram to the painting, quoted by Vasari, *Vite* III, 324; Herbert Horne, *Botticelli Painter of Florence* (1908, repr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 256. The fable, related in Horne, *Botticelli*, 257–59, concerns moral judgement—Apelles supposedly painted the *Calumny* to exonerate himself from slanderous accusations. Alberti recommends it as an invention in *De pictura* III.53. For Renaissance depictions of the fable (Benedetto Bourdon, Mantegna engraved by Gerolamo Mocetto, Lorenzo Leombruno, Primaticcio, Niccolò dell'Abate, Giorgio Ghisi, Franciabiagio, Federico Zuccari, Genga, Perino del Vaga), see Lucia Faedo, "L'impronta delle parole. Due momenti della pittura di ricostruzione" in *Memoria dell'antica* II, 5–42.

102 As in Botticelli's *Tragedy of Lucretia*, a richly adorned arch is the backdrop for a scene of cruelty. For description of the artworks in the *Calumny*, see Horne, *Botticelli*, 260–62; Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, 194–96, 269–70; Lightbown, *Botticelli* II, B 79; Stanley Meltzoff, *Botticelli, Signorelli and Savanarola—Poetic Theology from Boccaccio to Poliziano* (Florence: Olschki, 1986).

103 Meltzoff, *Botticelli*, identifies the mythological and biblical scenes depicted in the panels, including Lucian (*Calumnia* and *Zeuxis*), Philostratus, *Aeneid*, Livy and Boccaccio in *Decameron*, *Amorosa Visione*, *Teseida*, *Genealogia*, *Ninfale Fiesolano*, *Tratello in Laude de Dante*, *De mulieribus claris* and *De casibus virorum illustrium*. Faedo, "L'impronta", 13, notes the reconstruction of Zeuxis' *Family of Centaurs* beneath the podium of Midas' throne.



FIGURE 9.2 Botticelli, *Calumny of Apelles*, c. 1494. Florence, Uffizi.

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another. These meanings come together in the particular configuration, or occasion of the painting.

In this the *Calumny* looks like a visual equivalent to Humanist modes of reading where ornament illuminates each situation of *usus* by showing metaphoric relations with other situations; they also function as the pictorial equivalent of a para-text. Meltzoff suggests Poliziano as the inventor or advisor of these panels; the decorations evoke the relief door panels of Venus's palace described in the *Stanze* (and depicted in the *Birth of Venus*) but the elaborate contextual figurations in the *Calumny* also correspond to the intricate textual patterning of the *Sylvae*.¹⁰⁴ As in Fasanini's introduction to the *Hieroglyphica* and the 1548 *Emblemata*, nothing in the context is left bare or mute.

The multiplicity of these images, their complex interaction and the difficulty of identification within a small painting strains the limits of *ut pictura poesis*. The ornamental *emblemata* of the *Calumny* are far from our 'pre-metaphysical' model of ornament in which the reiterated motifs which play out the dialectic of form and formlessness. The *Calumny* shows that when ornament is used to figure a context of literary meaning, the decoration must have a clear visual

¹⁰⁴ Meltzoff, Botticelli, 234.

hierarchy, so that the direction and levels of reading are clear. This hierarchy is signalled by Ruscelli who stipulates the use of *imprese* in subsidiary, framing areas in *Discorso all'intorno all'invenzione dell'imprese*.¹⁰⁵

The fullest use of emblematic figuration in decorations which show topical or quasi mnemonic ordering and triumphal display appears in a sequence of Farnese and Medici decorations, with the repeated involvement of Vasari. In the Sala dei Cento Giorni, Palazzo della Cancelleria (1546), where Giovio was involved in the invention of decorations executed by Vasari, histories alternate with allegorical images and epigraphs, which must be read together.¹⁰⁶ In the association of Vasari and Giovio the epigraphic, emblematic interest in inscription of objects comes together with the decorated room, whose illusionist structure had become very dense in the late works of Raphael's workshop and those of his followers. This kind of epigraphic-image pairing appears in Giovio's other projects—the idea (according to Vasari) of writing lives of the artists and the “Musaeo Ioviani” at Como, near the ruins of Pliny's villa, where a sequence of rooms acted as settings for the *imprese* Giovio had invented and for portraits of famous men and women.¹⁰⁷ The Museum was a setting instrumentalised into something like a constructed memory place, whose loci contain depictions appropriate to certain kinds of activity.¹⁰⁸

The ‘place’ which holds arguments rendered as *figurae* is developed to full density in suites of rooms dedicated to thematic cycles in Vasari's decorations

105 Ruscelli, *Discorso*, in SAC III, 2762–63.

106 In *Gesta dipinte*, 47–50, Kliemann noted that the painted inscriptions in the Sala referring to one emperor are placed under the image of another, so that the room as a whole demands to be read as a nexus of allusions which go to celebrate the *gesta* of Paul III (Alessandro Farnese) as peacemaker and new Alexander. See also Hall, *After Raphael*, 153–56, on Gilio's characterisation of the cycle as the first example of mixed poetic-history painting. Kliemann notes Giovio's role as inventor of the triumphal decorations at Poggio a Caiano, with their Egyptian allusions and references to contemporary Roman spectacle, as well as Medici dynastic history.

107 Each room was devoted to a theme or *concetto* corresponding to the *imprese* and images: Mercury in the library, the Graces in the dining room, Charles V in the armoury. Giovio playfully named the elements of the scenery, the inlets and harbours of Lake Como, after classical sites, so that the museum stands like Hadrian's Villa in a miniaturised topography of the antique world. The Museum is described by Giovio in the *Elogia veris clarorum virorum imaginibus apposite quae in Musaeo Ioviani Comi spectantur*, Venice 1546. On Giovio's influence on Vasari's artistic biographies and encouragement of his *Vite*, see Rubin, *Vasari*, 162–64, 190, 218–30 on Vincenzo Borghini's role in the revised *Vite* of 1568.

108 Giovio's “Museo” was the source of inspiration for the Petrarchan pantheon which forms the original project of Anton Francesco Doni's *Pitture* (1564); see Bolzoni, *La stanza*, 204. Doni described the Museum in two letters, published in *Lettere* (1544) (see SAC III, 2892–2918), one to Tintoretto and one to Agostino Landi, the first ribald and the second erudite.



FIGURE 9.3 Vasari, *Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome, Sala dei Cento Giorni*, 1546.

PHOTO: MUSEI VATICANI.

in Palazzo Vecchio and at Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola, redeveloped under Vignola, decorated by artists including the Zuccari, Jacopo Bertoja, Raffaellino da Reggio, Giovanni Vecchio and Antonio Tempesta.¹⁰⁹ These triumphal decorations appear in rooms envisaged as theatres, containing visual arguments which form stages in a narrative of praise. The triumphal-encomiastic nature is anchored visually in the *imprese* which assert continuously the patron's identity. Within each room all that can be found in the room's theme

109 The scheme at Palazzo Vecchio, completed 1558, which paralleled the Medici on the piano nobile with the gods on the storey above was devised by Cosimo Bartoli, translator of *De re aedificatoria*, who instructed Vasari in letters of 1555 and 1556. In *Ragionamenti del sig. cav. Giorgio Vasari sopra le invenzioni da lui dipinte in Firenze* Vasari expounds the decorations to Francesco de' Medici in a Philostratus style dialogue. On the encomiastic structure of the Caprarola and Palazzo Vecchio decorations, see Kliemann, *Gesta*, 55–77; Onofrio Panvinio and Paolo Manuzio supplied themes and inscriptions for the Salone at Caprarola. For documents on the decoration of Caprarola, see Loren Partridge, *The Frescoes of the Villa Farnese at Caprarola* (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1969).



FIGURE 9.4 Taddeo Zuccari, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola, Sala di Concilio di Trento, detail of vault with imprese 1560–66.

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ
CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. PHOTO: CHIARA PANCALDI.

is given figurative form, and the capacity of the rooms to function as mnemonic loci is crucial to grasping correspondences between different storeys or wings of the building.¹¹⁰ In each case, extended inventions are applied to entire suites or floors of rooms.¹¹¹

In Caro's letter to Taddeo Zuccari on the decoration of the bedchamber of Alessandro Farnese at Caprarola, the relations between various elements within a scheme are invented topically by attribute, conjunction, opposition or effect. The circular courtyard and stairway at Caprarola shares its form with the 'temples' and rotundas of literary mnemonic galleries like Doni's, while the pentagonal plan creates corresponding wings which converge on

110 On the use of real places for mnemonic exercise, see Kliemann, *Gesta*, 46, on Francesco Sansovino in *Arte in oratoria* (1546), who used the Loggia of the Campanile of San Marco designed by his father Jacopo as an exemplar of artificial memory.

111 See Vasari's *Ragionamenti*. Caro discussed the Caprarola inventions in a letter of 2 November 1562 to Taddeo Zuccari on the Sala di Aurora, included in Vasari's *Life of Zuccari*, and in a letter to Onofrio Panvinio, May 15, 1565, on the Stanza della Solitudine; see *Lettere Familiari*, ed. Aulo Greco (Florence: Le Monnier, 1957), 111, 131–40; 237–40. Seznec *Survival*, 288–98, demonstrated that the Caprarola and Palazzo Vecchio decorations use Cartari's *Le Imagini de i dei degli Antichi* (1556); he criticised such use of the codified mythographic manuals of the later Renaissance, rehashed by sycophantic court literati and teams of Mannerist decorators into pedantic, repetitive and banal decorations.



FIGURE 9.5 *Vignola and Antonio Tempesta, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola. Scala Regia, frescoed 1579–83.*

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. PHOTO: AUTHOR.

the studiolo dedicated to Hermathena. On the piano nobile, there is matching ornamental articulation in corresponding rooms on facing wings, apparently dedicated to ‘active’ and ‘contemplative’ life, so that they are perceived—and remembered—as pendants.¹¹² The Caprarola decorations develop the tendencies noted by Kliemann in the Sala dei Cento Giorni, not only based on rhetorical principles but capable of generating orations: in a word, topical.¹¹³ At Caprarola, the mnemonic character to this topical decoration is displayed

¹¹² Clare Robertson, *Il gran cardinal: Alessandro Farnese, patron of the arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) challenges this reading due to lack of documentary evidence.

¹¹³ Kliemann, *Gesta*, 46–47.

fully, with its exhaustive range of symbols, agent images, *mappamundi* and the instrumental use of place.

In Palazzo Vecchio the parallel between Medici and gods on corresponding rooms on different stories shows the degree of literalism with which allegory could be projected onto physical place. At Caprarola, the triumph of the Farnese forms the foundation for the entire palace, acting as a representational medium for the schemes of invention found within each room and within larger thematic cycles played out over floors of the building (active and contemplative life on the piano nobile; the seasons downstairs; the relation between the two floors).¹¹⁴ The decorations, in which Farnese *imprese* appear constantly, derive their ornate character from their abundance but also from the encomiastic character which pervades the entire building, making the act of showing an act of praise. As at Palazzo Vecchio, the architecture is instrumentalised, although in a more subtle and far-reaching way; the repeated circular spaces (two-storey court, monumental stairway, chapel) make viewers feel as though they were passing through a cyclical narrative which can be rehearsed and renewed in a reiterative, theatrical temporality. Caprarola develops the relationship of plan and ornament we shall see in Raphael's architecture in a schematic way so as to fabricate certain predetermined responses and associations in the viewer. This conditioning of the spectator appears in other projects of Vignola, as we saw in Chapter 8, and presents his reworking of the topographic and scenographic experiments of Raphael and Peruzzi.

Caprarola was the subject of a cycle of epigrams composed by Ameto Orti (c. 1585–89), which employ topoi from the *Planudean Anthology*.¹¹⁵ The first five epigrams describe Farnese *imprese*; the cycle as a whole works with the connection between inscription, device and epigram, signalling it as a mode of conceiving a monumental building. The epigrams are epideictic and topical, drawing their matter from conventions appropriate to the decorations they describe. In the epigram in praise of Vignola the palace is compared favourably

114 See Gérard Labrot, *Le Palais Farnèse de Caprarola: Essai de Lecture* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1970), 11, 17, on the concealment of service areas, with service stairs hidden within the walls, so that the spectacular character of the palace could be experienced without interruption and on the suppression of the practical aspect of villa life, such as garden plots and fish ponds.

115 *La Caprarola di Ameto Orti*, ed. Fritz Baumgart, *Studj Romani* 25 (1935), 77–179. See epigram 27, “In Delphini fontem” on the boy playing with the dolphin; epigram 32 on the sleeping Cupid; epigram 30, “De floribus”. The epigrams composed on the religious iconography of the Room of Dreams, Room of the Judgement of Solomon, Room of Contemplation and Room of Angels also suggest the *tituli* of church mosaics.

to the theatre of Pompey, and said to be what it once was.¹¹⁶ The reference is telling, as the theatre included a gallery for display of Pompey's triumphal *spolia* and statues, and mixed typologies, showing aspects of temple architecture and extending into a complex with colonnades and a forum.¹¹⁷ Orti's comparison thus envisages Caprarola as a kind of universal spectacle space, synthesised into a cyclical theatre.

Caprarola blends architectural typologies through their shared spectacular features and turns its environs into an axial topography which it dominates.¹¹⁸ Décor for the 1565 wedding of Francesco de' Medici and Joanna of Austria in Florence, devised by Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini and described by Giovan Battista Cini, shows how emblematic inventions could be expanded to urban level.¹¹⁹ In this 'discovery' of the city as a triumphal topography, two elements are in interplay: emblematic-topical invention and scenography. The ephemeral arches and edifices, termed *teatri*, manipulated the urban topography into monumental axes by various modes—they framed monuments or other ephemeral triumphal facades, or disguised awkward junctions, like the Arch of Austria at Palazzo Strozzi in Via Tornabuoni, which had a double arch with one arch "discovering" a civic prospect and the other painted with an illusionistic street scene.¹²⁰ The arches create the vistas, real and fabricated, which gives the narrative its visual continuity, and supports the decorations which provide the pictorial arguments.

The descriptions of ephemeral *apparati* illustrate how decorations were read, with their topical organisation and the rhetorical strategies they use to

116 Orti, *La Caprarola* 137, epigram 135, "Vignola architectus", "Aemula Pompei exclamat Caprarola theatro/ Quid mihi te iactas? Nos sumus hoc quod eras".

117 See Temelini, "Pompey's Politics".

118 See the topographical frescoes in the Guardroom and the Sala di Ercole directly above; on the alignment of the town of Caprarola into a vista leading to the villa, see Labrot, *Caprarola*.

119 Vasari published Cini's descriptions with revisions and without acknowledgement in the 1568 *Vite*, repr. *Vite* VI, 256–367; cf. Domenico Mellini, *Descrizione della entrata della serenissima regina Giovanna d'Austria e dell'apparato fatto in Firenze nella venuta, e per le felicissime nozze di Sua Altezza* (Florence: Giunta, 1566). See Starn and Partridge, *Arts of Power*, 157–256, 267–304, with documentation of Borghini's inventions for *apparati* and *imprese*; Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici*, 13–35. Starn and Partridge, *Arts of Power*, 207–10, note that in Mellini's *Descrizione* all the names of the artists are listed.

120 Such framing appears in the arches created by Il Cigoli for the wedding of Henri IV and Maria de' Medici in 1600.

locate themselves by engaging in 'dialogues' with permanent monuments.¹²¹ Such 'conversations' continue the familiar epigraphic theme of the statue who 'says' new things when placed in new contexts and configurations. More fundamentally, the descriptions create a kind of artificial city which is superimposed or mingles with the existing fabric, as the Vasari-Cini description speaks of the pleasing deceit, the "piacevolissimo inganno" of the "artifiziiosa prospettiva" drawn out from one *apparato* to the next. The aestheticizing tendency in Bruni develops into an ornate mask or extended conceit which becomes co-extensive with the city itself.¹²² In the 1565 festivities, the culminating urban perspective came in the Salone dei Cinquecento within Palazzo Vecchio, where the *commedia* performed for the festivities featured a prospect of the Santa Trinità quarter and Via Maggio; the city and its representation as theatre are apparently locked together.¹²³

The arches and *teatri* were dedicated to a series of topics, opening at the Porta di Prato with Florence as mother of the arts.¹²⁴ The overload of epigrams and multiple 'lively' personifications in the *teatri* develop the 'conceited' reading which grows from statue and epigram pairings. The statue celebrated through epigrams concerns context; these emblematic edifices replete with allegories and verses generally present a complex figuration of a topic. In descriptions of the decorations the play of word and image through *istoria*, framing figures, statues, emblems, "medals", epigraphs, inscriptions and trophies comprised of instruments goes alongside the invocation of their *energeia* or prosopopoeia—again an old element in epigrams which was renewed in emblematics. The Vasari-Cini description describes the entry as a narrative

121 On the 'conversations' between the statues of the Piazza della Signoria, see John Shearman, *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). The *apparato* dedicated to Medici *gesta* alludes to Michelangelo's Medici Chapel and the 1513 Capitol theatre.

122 See Zorzi, *La città*, and idem, *Il luogo teatrale a Firenze*, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1975).

123 This scene was covered by a canvas by Federico Zuccari for which the cartoon still exists depicting the city seen in panorama from without its walls. The Santa Trinità area was transformed permanently for the 1565 entry, with the erection of a porphyry column given by Pius IV to Cosimo de' Medici; another permanent *apparato* was the fountain beside Palazzo Vecchio containing Ammannati's *Neptune* colossus.

124 Joanna of Austria's coronation took place at Porta del Prato. Subsequent decorations showed topographic allegories of Tuscany and Austria, arches dedicated to Hymen, Religion, Virtue, the Medici and Hapsburgs, with the penultimate arch before Palazzo Vecchio was dedicated to Civic Virtue. The Porta del Prato decorations echoed Landino's praise of Florentine notables in the Proemio to his Dante commentary in content and Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura in visual organisation.

in which the decorations play dramatic roles; the allegories and topics of the *apparati* are described as a series of actors who orchestrate Joanna's welcome, or the articulations of one poetic "body":

Let us say that the intention in these ornaments was to represent with all these paintings and sculptures, as though they were living, all the ceremonies, affects and pomps which were proper for the reception and wedding of so great a princess; poetically and ingeniously forming of them one body so proportioned that with judgement and grace it might work the designed effects.¹²⁵

Entries represent an extreme point of emblematic decoration in the complexity of the embodying elements, the monumental scale and in the occasional nature of the decorations, 'fulfilled' by the presence of specific people who move through them in specific ways on a unique occasion; such 'fulfilment' was characteristically an animation, in the *energeia* of the figurations, the use of living statues or choirs which burst into song as a triumphal figure approaches. In this situation we see a convergence of the emblem, the lively image and the real actor who presents her- or himself as a living figure—a convergence given further emphasis by the analogies between the *impresa* and the human being. This convergence appeared in the emblematic triumphs or masquerades for the 1565 festivities, again invented and designed by Borghini and Vasari, "La Genealogia degli Dei" (a Boccaccio-based pageant of theogony) and "Il Trionfo de' sogni" (featuring triumphs of love, fame, wealth, madness and sleep, with forty eight accompanying witches).¹²⁶ In these designs, the masquer is literally a "lively figure" who performs the *concetto* represented through a costume, loaded with 'hieroglyphic' detail, and a mask.

The notion of metaphor itself as a theatrical mask appears in Caro's *Apologia degli Academici di Banchi di Roma contra Messer Ludovico Castelvetro* (1555), his defence of his encomiastic poem to Alessandro Farnese "Venite a l'ombra

125 Ibid., 256: "Diremo . . . che intenzione in tutti questi ornamenti fu di rappresentare con tante pitture e sculture, quasi che vive fussero, tutte quelle cerimonie ed affetti e pompe, che per il ricevimento e per le nozze di Principessa sì grande pareva che convenevoli esser dovessero; poeticamente et ingegnosamente formandone un corpo in tal guiso proportionato, che con giudizio e grazia i disegnati effetti operasse". The notion of the entry as a single body appears also in Mellini, *Descrizione*, 2, who aimed to "legare le parti di questo corpo insieme, e unirle". For the *apparati* as actors, see Vasari-Cini, *Descrizione*, 307.

126 See Baccio Baldini, *Discorso sopra la mascherata della genealogia degl'Iddei de' gentili* (Florence: Giunta, 1566).

de'gran gigli d'oro" (1553), where he argues that as carnival is to the flesh, poetry is to the spirit; each uses masks, as people and things have two sides, the natural (the face or the proper name) and the artificial (*posticcio*)—the mask or the metaphor, which can be exchanged and serve varied uses.¹²⁷ Caro discusses the figures of his poem as a series of masked figures which he then renders in their "natural faces", so that desire has the 'mask' of fire, etc. This reading turns the poem into a type of pageant where each figure 'acts out' its artificial significance. Here we also see that allegory passes from a narrative into an agglomeration of single figures orchestrated together in a spectacle.¹²⁸ Caro's view of metaphor as mask, like the actor who impersonates a 'hieroglyph' in the 1565 pageants, shows the impact of the analogies of *impresa* and composite human being. Such artificiality has its counterpart in the overlay of the city with the emblematic spectacle of the *apparati* and the new vistas of significance which they 'discover' through their alignment—vistas in which the real, existing city is ambiguously appropriated and manipulated.

Here we have an assemblage of many of the elements of Mannerist decoration—the emblematic continuum which includes 'hieroglyphs', 'lively' images and actors, the density as allegory becomes an accumulation of over-determined figures and the scenographic setting, with its triumphal mixing of the real and the illusory, which provides a visual vehicle of narrative continuity. The scene is thus set for the last elements in our picture—the development of ornamental design, the role of *spolia* and the *grotesche*, most prolific of all Renaissance ornaments.

127 Caro, *Opere* ed. Stefano Jacomuzzi (Turin: UTET, 1974), 182.

128 Ibid., 183.

Spolia and Ornamental Design

Antique ornament can refer to decorative motifs, to sculpture and figuration more generally or that which makes the civic role of buildings evident. In this chapter, we shall consider the treatment of decorative motifs, where the fragmentary nature of the *memorie* comes together with a schematic mode of designing ornament whose extant sources go back to late antiquity.¹ Barkan commented on the openness of categories of fragment, whole or restoration and on the difference between modular objects which can be fragmented and the fragment which has a value independent of being made whole again—whose worth comes from immanent qualities.² We shall see how the framing role of ornament becomes itself subject to historical recreation or invention. It thereby loses something of the ‘pre-metaphysical’ role we claimed for it, to become part of a historical projection. This will lead to ornament’s being seen increasingly as a kind of imaginative historicising invention, associated with an artist, period or style.

The presentation of ornaments as a range of sample patterns appears in medieval model books, such as the sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, dated c. 1230.³ Ornamental design would seem to be the area where there is most Renaissance continuity with medieval practices, with schematic presentation of examples detached from context; a practice that continues to this day in design patterns for all things from machine parts to tattoos.⁴ The taxonomic tendency in model books, with their pages of beasts and stock figures variously

1 See Robert Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books* (Haarlem: De Erven F. Bohn N.V., 1963), cat. 2 showing Egyptian papyrus designs for textiles, fourth-sixth century CE; idem, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900–ca. 1450)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), cat. 2.

2 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 121–22, 204.

3 See the ninth or tenth century French acanthus motifs in the Vatican Library, Ms. Reg. Lat. 596, fols. 26–27, reproduced Scheller, *Survey*, cat. nos. 3 and 9; *Exemplum*, 100–101.

4 For the development from model book to sketch book in the Quattrocento, see Annegrit Schmitt, *Disegni del Pisanello e di maestri del suo tempo* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1966). Scheller, *Exemplum*, 81, notes the “typically medieval anonymity and respect for tradition” in textile pattern books. Snodin and Howard, *Ornament*, Chapter 1, recount the development from early ornament prints to trade catalogues, design manuals and encyclopaedias. See also Timothy Clifford, *Designs of Desire: Architectural and Ornament Prints and Drawings 1500–1850* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1999); Hind, *Early Italian Engraving* (7 vols).



FIGURE 10.1 Villard de Honnecourt, sketchbook 5v, c. 1230, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

PHOTO: BNF.

posed, also suggests ornament conceived as an inventive play from a finite number of elements, within given limits.⁵

5 On the adaptation of motifs from oriental textile art in the late Trecento designs used by Jacopo Bellini, see Scheller, *Exemplum* cat. 25; on Bellini's drawings see Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, *Corpus der italienischen Handzeichnungen 1300–1450*, 8 vols. (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1968–90), 11/1 cat. 625–63; 11/3, pls. 69–78; 11.5, 239–41; 11/6, 367, 378, 407–19; 11/7

Medieval model books, like that of Villard de Honnecourt, do not show a fundamental difference in the mode of drawing people, decoration and buildings. Renaissance sketchbooks by contrast exhibit distinct modes of notation for architecture, figural art and decorative motifs.⁶ Studies of ornament in sketchbooks include careful delineations of decoration on a monument (e.g. a funerary altar), measured drawings of architectural ornament, motifs drawn in the manner of pattern books or *Musterbücher* and doodling renditions of *grottesche*.⁷ These studies suggest the widening between ornamental design and study of figural sculpture, involving views from different angles and anatomical detail, or from architectural drawing. The Codex Escorialensis features pages of pilasters, bases and capitals which Egger identified as copies.⁸ In the

pls. 65, 87, 90–93, 90–102, 115–16; idem, *Jacopo Bellini: The Louvre Album of Drawings*, trans. Frank Mecklenburg (New York: George Braziller, 1984); Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 37–38, et passim.

- 6 See Scheller, *Exemplum and Survey*; Joseph Rushton, *Italian Renaissance Figurative Sketchbooks, 1450–1520*, doctoral dissertation (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1976); Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus*; Ames-Lewis, *Drawing in Early Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Hubert Günther, *Das Studium der antiken Architektur in den Zeichnungen der Hochrenaissance* (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1988); *Antikenzeichnung und Antikenstudium in Renaissance und Frühbarock*, ed. Richard Harpath and Henning Wrede (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1989); Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture. A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Christian, *Empire*; Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini* (Leiden: Brill; London: Warburg Institute, 1957).
- 7 On the origins of the term *Musterbuch*, used by Julius von Schlosser in “Zur Kenntnis der künstlerischen Überlieferung im späten Mittelalter”, *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 23 (1902), see Scheller, *Exemplum*, 29, n. 98; Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 37–40. The earliest studies of antiquities appear to be those made by Gentile da Fabriano; if made during his Rome visit, they would date to 1426–27. Pisanello drew antique architectural ornament, including architraves; see Louvre, inv. 2271, 2295, 2293; on drawings of antique architectural fragments attributed to the circle of Benozzo Gozzoli, dated c. 1450–65, see Scheller, *Exemplum* 374.
- 8 *Codex Escorialensis: Ein Skizzenbuch aus der Werkstatt Domenico Ghirlandaios* ed. Hermann Egger (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1905–6), fols. 17, 18v–19v, 57r; similar studies of panoplies, friezes, capitals, column bases appear at fols. 16r, 21v–22v, 24r. The Codex Escorialensis, generally discussed as an amalgam of three sketchbooks of copied drawings of antiquities which arrived in Spain by autumn 1509, was attributed by Egger to the workshop of Ghirlandaio but has been shown to contain drawings copied from Raphael's circle. See Hanno-Walter Kruft, “Concerning the Date of the Codex Escorialensis”, *The Burlington Magazine* 112, 802 (January 1970), 44–47; John Shearman, “Raphael, Rome and the Codex Escorialensis” *Master Drawings* 15, 2 (1977), 107–46; Arnold Nesselrath, “I libri di disegni di antichità. Tentativo di una tipologia”, in *Memoria dell'antico* 111, 89–147; idem, “Raphael's Archaeological

Codex Barberini 4424 of Giuliano da Sangallo, technical architectural drawings co-exist with fanciful images of ruinous *memorie* and serialised designs of architectural ornaments, such as trabeation or capitals.⁹ The variety of representational modes appears in Giuliano's other sketchbook, the Taccuino Senese, which contains plans, engineering studies, sketches of antiquities and pages of ornamental *grottesche* (fols. 38–45).¹⁰ The latter are frequently sketched as half-candelabra, forming a template.¹¹ If the capacity of motifs for extension and accommodation is tried out, we also see the detachment and fanciful elaboration of details, like helmets from sarcophagi or mythical creatures (Taccuino Senese 38–40; cf. Heemskerck 79.D.2a 15–15v).

Ornament thus shows two kinds of fragmentation: as damaged antique and as module. The antique remain may present its damage as part of its unique worth; depictions of damage become a staple of depictions of antiquities such as Francisco de Holanda's *Antigualhas* (1539–40) and Heemskerck's Roman sketchbooks.¹² It may be displayed within an aggregative structure (*spolia*, mosaic, trophy) or become an object of study. Aside from its despoiled condition, Roman art also provides numerous images of *spolia*, in reliefs with trophies.¹³ The module by contrast is by nature generalised and created for serial repetition; its form may be altered without significant change in meaning. It signals continuity, since a single module supplies the design template, and anonymity; its capacity for variation signals the lack of a prototype,

Method", in *Raffaello a Roma*, 357–71; Jean Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio*, 306–09. Motifs in the Codex also appear in Giuliano da Sangallo's Taccuino Senese. Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, 157, notes that the postulation of copies creates a regress of hypothetical sources and suggests that decorative drawings presented in a pattern-book manner may be finished versions of originals studied by the same artist.

- 9 Giuliano da Sangallo's studies of antiques, in the Codex Barberini 4424 and the Taccuino Senese, took their final form between 1510 and his death in 1516 but incorporated studies from the 1480s (Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, 101). On Codex Barberini's relation to pattern books, see Beverley Brown and Diane Kleiner, "Giuliano da Sangallo's Drawings after Ciriaco D'Ancona: Transformations of Greek and Roman Antiquities in Athens", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42, 4 (1983), 321–35.
- 10 Stefano Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo*, 302–10, sees the *grottesche* as taken from other artists, and doubts Giuliano's first-hand knowledge of the Domus Aurea.
- 11 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Taccuino Senese* ed. Ludovico Zdekauer (Siena: Rodolfo Falb, 1902, repr. Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1979), 41, 42, 44, 45.
- 12 See de Holanda, *Os Desenhos das Antigualhas que vio* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Relaciones Culturales, 1940), 18r, 25r, 29v–30r, for the cracked Bocca della verità and the broken members of colossoi.
- 13 See Barkan, *Unearthing*, 129, on the "quantity and particularity of things" exhibited by the four-sided Roman pilasters with trophies now in the Uffizi.



FIGURE 10.2 Giuliano da Sangallo, *Tacuinio Senese*,
41v. Biblioteca comunale degli
Intronati, Siena.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA COMUNALE
DEGLI INTRONATI, SIENA.

an authoritative or canonical form. The two modes are conflated in the conventional representation of modular architectural decorations (entablatures or capitals) drawn with signs of decay, like cracks and jagged, torn borders.¹⁴ The sketchbooks show ornament as the area of design most associated with the artist's fantasy *and* the most conventional or schematic area of design; both metaphoric and metonymic.¹⁵ The licence for play in decorative design

14 Damaged architecture becomes a staple background to engravings of famous antiques, such as Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving of *Laocoon*, repr. *Bartsch* XXVII, 353 (268) and Nicoletto da Modena's images of saints, gods and allegories framed by ruins, in *Bartsch* XXV.

15 Thus drawings of ornament cannot be fitted into the distinctions between pattern books as finished records and sketchbooks, with "rapid sketches...either inspired only by

lies partly in its freedom from authorial determination; it also reflects the growing importance of the artist's *disegno* which reveals itself in all compositions, even in the design of trivial or ephemeral objects.

Ornamental areas in decorations become points where the fantastic character of invention is played out, while still exhibiting the hand and grace which individualises an artist's design—or *disegno*. It is through *disegno* that a decoration is intelligible as a unity in multiplicity, with the ornament denoting the role of fantasy in creating design. The theme of praise visualised is rendered through the variety, transformations and animations of form and material by the intellectual-imaginative play of the artist's "idea".

Ornamental design is affected by the emergence of drawing as a fine art, and both are influenced by printing which provided the means to disseminate design. The emergence of a conception of ornamental design as manifestation of an artist's manner derives from the capacity to synthesise or master antiquity, and the move from fragmentary representations. We shall trace the movement from the exaltation of the fragment and the interest in *spolia* decoration to calls for a unified classical style and the absorption of ornament into artistic manner.

Rupture and Restitution

The naïve drawings which accompany Giovanni Marcanova's epigraphic sylloge, *Collectio antiquitatum* (earliest illustrated copy 1465) anticipate subsequent approaches to depiction of Roman antiquities.¹⁶ Like the *Hypnerotomachia*

the artist's interest in life or with the fruit of his imagination" (De Tolnay, *History and Technique of Old Master Drawings*, 1943, repr. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1972, 33); see Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, 19.

- 16 The illustrated ms exists in two copies; Modena, Biblioteca Estense (cod. a. L. 5. 15 [lat. 992]) and Garrett MS. 158, Princeton University Library. The first version of Marcanova's *Collectio* (Bern Stadt-und Universitätsbibliothek MS. B.42) is dated 1457–60; Garrett MS. 158 is dated 1471 or after 1473 and the drawings "ultimately derive from the Modena manuscript" of 1465. Felice Feliciano has been proposed as the scribe of Garrett MS. 158; see description of Garrett MS. 158 on the manuscripts website of Princeton University Library, <http://www.princeton.edu/~rbsc/departments/manuscripts/medieval.html> retrieved 5 March 2015; Christoph Hülsen, *La Roma antica di Ciriaco d'Ancona* (Rome: Ermanno Loescher, 1907); Silvia Squarzina, "Eclisse del gusto cortese e nascita della cultura antiquaria: Ciriaco, Feliciano, Marcanova, Alberti" in *Da Pisanello all nascita dei musei Capitolini: L'antico a Roma alla vigilia del Rinascimento* ed. Anna Cavallaro and Enrico Parlato (Milan: Mondadori, 1998), 27–45; Charles Mitchell, "Archaeology";

the work mixes epigraphs with images of ceremonies and public or spectacle buildings. The 'antique' flavour lies in the architectural ornamentation: vases and acanthus motifs, entablatures with festoons and putti or masks. The two most ornate scenes in Marcanova depict a triumph, emerging from a triumphal arch, and a view of tombs, i.e. occasions of praise and memory. The civic role of ornament in distinguishing activities and showing illustriousness is obvious and it suggests that Roman architecture can be recreated by fabricating motifs such as friezes with wreaths and putti.

The Marcanova illustrations show 'Rome' as a Medieval city with *all'antica* decoration; the ornament carries historical reference which is realised by the scene depicted. The privileged motifs—garlands, putti, vases—can also be actors or instruments in histories.¹⁷ The ornament can be used to 'recreate' antiquity but to do so it must be in close relation to the activity it frames. This appears in the *Florentine Picture Chronicle*, ascribed to the circle of Maso Finiguerra, where acanthus scrolls form a variety of niches, chariots, baldachins and costumes for the heterogeneous parade of biblical, classical and legendary figures. These settings give a stylistic coherence and a flexible unity to its diverse figurations. Certain scenes are effectively constructed from ornament, notably the drawing of Paris and Helen (drawing 57). The drawing brings together ornament as frame, as dress, as garland and as dance, as the gorgeously dressed lovers describe a circle within a tempietto with Donatello-style ornament, with scaly columns and a frieze where a chorus of putti sounding instruments hymn the couple. The circling movement and the framing decoration work to display the presence of beauty in ordering, shown through the relation of gesture, music and visual spectacle. The richness of the image lies not only in the opulence of the detail but in the sense of relatedness between dress, architecture and movement. It also shows these relations realised as harmony through the *energeia* of the dance led around the tempietto. Here the continuity between setting and action created by ornament is shown in the most felicitous way, suggesting the intimate relationship of ornament and theatre. Where such activity is absent, the ornament appears as fragments in a topography, as in the Marcanova illustration of Monte Testaccio.¹⁸ The grassy hill covered in broken or half-buried antique vases provides a foretaste of subsequent antiquarian illustration.

Elizabeth Lawrence, "The Illustrations of the Garrett and Modena Manuscripts of Marcanova", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 6 (1927), 127–31; Brown, *Venice*, 120–26, on the affinities of Marcanova's sylloge with Jacopo Bellini's drawings.

17 The ubiquitous vases also indicate Roman wealth, as in the drawing of the Roman mint.

18 Garrett MS. 158, fol. 2r.



FIGURE 10.3 Giovanni Marcanova, *Collectio antiquitatum*, fol. 5r, 1471/post 1473. Princeton University Library.

We saw that the Theodosian Code offers insights into the historic, civic understanding of architectural ornament.¹⁹ Ornament is preserved as a means of cultural continuity, but makes rupture of meaning a condition for

19 See Joseph Alchermes, "Spolia in Roman Cities of the late Empire: Legislative Rationales and Architectural Re-use", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1994), 167–78.



FIGURE 10.4 Maso Finiguerra and circle. "Helen abducted by Paris" from *"The Florentine Picture Chronicle"*, 1470–75.

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FIGURE 10.5 Giovanni Marcanova, *Collectio antiquitatum*, fol. 2r. Princeton University Library.

preservation.²⁰ This shows a shift in meaning from devotional to artistic value, as extolled by Prudentius in *Contra Symmachum* calling for the preservation and ‘cleansing’ of statues, so that they become *pulcherrima ornamenta*, no

20 See *Theodosian Code* xvi.10.5 on maintenance of “ornaments of public work” after the prohibition of sacrifice, xvi.10.18 forbidding the destruction of temples once emptied of “illicit things”, xvi.10.19.2 on the preservation of temples for other uses, once statues and altars are destroyed.

longer in the service of evil.²¹ The combination of continuity and rupture in the Theodosian Code also shows the distinction between specific meaning (e.g. iconography) and ornament which creates a general *decor*. *Ornatus* is the embodiment of civic dignity through monuments, signalling the cultural continuity of institutions, and so their historic worth, as in antique discussions of family honours and funeral orations as *monumenta* and *ornamenta* to be reused.

Ancient discussions of architectural reuse spoke of *saxa rediviva* or *lapis redivivus*, using the language of rebirth to signal continuity in transformation.²² Pagan artefacts are both the gods vanquished by Christianity triumphant and the prized vessels of cultural continuity. Similar themes appear in the Renaissance, as the survival of remains signals the endurance of the virtue they commemorate, which can overcome dislocation in time, place and context.²³ Enduring yet broken, precious stones are the most potent manifestation of antiquity's survival of time and the destruction by "barbarians" or *ignoranti* decied polemically by the Humanists. Christian comments:

Antiquities . . . were valued for what they had been but also for the fact that they had been harmed and for the opportunities that fragmentation created for those who wished to exploit it.²⁴

Dismemberment is an injury which destroys form and a condition for its recreation for various ends—it can also turn an iconographic sign into a motif and

21 "liceat statuas consistere puras/ Artificum magnorum opera, haec pulcherimma, malim,/ Ornamenta fiant patriae nec decolor usus/ in vitium versae monumenta coinquinet artis", Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 1.503–506. Alchermes, "Spolia", 170–71, notes an imperial constitution of 382 concerning a temple of an unnamed Eastern city whose statues were to be preserved as artworks. Cf. Barkan, *Unearthing*, 123: "The beautiful fragment becomes the place where pagan worship is turned into the religion of art".

22 Alchermes, "Spolia", 167.

23 See Christian, *Empire*, 25–27, quoting Cola di Rienzo and Petrarch in *De remediis utriusque fortunae* on ancient use of statues to great men; Giovanni Dondi D'Orologio in a letter of the 1380s or 90s compares statues, triumphal arches and sculpted columns, honours conferred on great men, to the virtues they possessed, recorded in texts.

24 Ibid., 45, also 41–44 on Cencio de' Rustici and Ghiberti on the marble burners and clerics who brought destruction to ancient artworks. Cf. Barkan, *Unearthing*, 120: "There is nothing more obvious or more important about rediscovered sculpture than the fact that it is nearly always broken".

acquire the detachable, accidental character of ornament.²⁵ These ideas were developed also in literature: Joachim Du Bellay in the *Deffense et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse* (1549) celebrated the spoliation of antique language as a condition for the flourishing of the vernacular, depredation as essential to imitation, celebrated in the language of triumph:

March boldly then, Frenchman, to that proud Roman city: and, as you have done more than once, adorn your temples and altars with spoils seized from it.²⁶

The recovery of antique remains requires their decisive separation from their original context, so that the success of a renaissance is conditional on the understanding of history as both accomplishment and decay.²⁷ In the *Antiquitez de Rome* (1558), where Bellay laments the destructive work of time, Rome as despoiler and despoiled is exemplary for the way that historic cycles of power and decline imitate cosmic temporality, culminating in a Stoic evocation of universal destruction.²⁸

The 'fragment aesthetic' makes an early appearance in Manuel Chrysoloras in his letter on the *Old and New Rome*. Chrysoloras echoes the attitude to civic *ornatus* of the Theodosian Code: beyond our admiration at the grandeur and artistry of ancient remains, we admire the virtues and prowess which they embody.²⁹ Chrysoloras notes that we can find beauty "not only in

25 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 211: "It is precisely in relation to the disfigured condition of ancient sculptural representations that voices reverberate around them". On reuse and decay, see Settis, "Continuità", 484; on the 'genealogical' use of remains by Roman families, see Christian, *Empire*, Chapter 4.

26 Joachim du Bellay, *Poésies* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 264, "Là donc, Français, marchez courageusement vers cette superbe cité romaine: et des serves dépouilles d'elle (comme vous avez fait plus d'une fois) ornez vos temples et autels". On Bellay's use of Italian sources (Bembo, Gelli and Speroni's *Dialogo delle lingue*, 1542), see Vasoli, *La dialettica*, 475, citing P. Villey, *Les sources italiennes de la "Deffense"* (Paris: Champion, 1908). On Bellay's relation to Roman antiquarianism and ruin poetry, see George Tucker, *The Poet's Odyssey, Joachim Du Bellay and the Antiquitez de Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 55ff; Greene, *Light in Troy*, 189–96; 220–41; *ibid.*, "Resurrecting Rome: The Double Task of the Humanist Imagination", in *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, ed. P. Ramsey (Binghampton NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1982), 41–54.

27 See McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation*, 268. A similarly aggressive view of imitated writers as antagonists appears in Calcagnini's exchange *De imitatione* with Giraldis Cinthio (1532).

28 *Antiquités* 22.

29 PG 156, col. 28. See Niutta, *Due Rome*, 40–42, for Aleardi's 1454 Latin version. Chrysoloras contrasts the way pilgrims trample, damage and spit on the tombs of the emperors who

composite and unified things, but also in things divided in pieces [*diairethenta*].³⁰ Chrysoloras insists that parts are as beautiful as wholes, by analogy with the body, but he also suggests an aesthetic distinct from the criteria of integrity and perfection. The fragment is beautiful because of its historic associations, its function as a synecdoche for the vanished whole, but Chrysoloras intimates that it is also beautiful in itself. The implications of this are considerable.

An alternative emerges to a concept of beauty based on the teleology of form, or on light as non-quantitative emanation.³¹ A conception of beauty based on fragment will be qualitative rather than quantitative, but such qualities may be accidental, products of chance circumstance. In a fragment aesthetic, the representation of a thing will include the signs (the 'ornament') of endurance or wear in time. It will also involve the fantasy, as we must imagine the whole of which the fragment is a part, and as fragment its associative significance implies memory.³² This imaginative activity is obvious in statues left maimed, like the *Belvedere Torso*, as Winckelmann later remarked, and in the deferred completion of the *non-finito*, the counterpart of the broken antique or pseudo-antique.³³ Michelangelo's pseudo-antique *Bacchus* is shown by Heemskerck amongst broken torsos and relief fragments with which it shares its 'ruinous' state in a sketch which thematises the poetic plenitude of the incomplete *anticaglie*. If Byzantine architectural *ekphraseis* involved the play of fantasy in aesthetic experience, the fragment aesthetic of Chrysoloras exalted the imaginative faculties (fantasy, memory) at the expense of the *integritas* and perfection of the beautiful.

persecuted Christians, with the reverence shown to the mosaic images of Peter and Paul, probably in the apse of Old St Peter's and destroyed in 1594; see PG 156, col. 31; Niutta *Due Rome*, 18–20. Niutta notes the regard for Chrysoloras amongst Counter-Reformation theologians such as Possevin in *Apparatus sacer* (ibid., 13).

30 PG, 156, col 25. Aleardi translates "Nec composita et constructa solum, sed disiecta et quoque et diruta speciem quandam prae se fert" (Niutta, *Due Rome*, 40), expanding *diairethenta* into things broken up and pulled asunder. In Chrysoloras' letter to his brother Demetrius (PG 156, 57–60) he states that many men would prefer a ruined statue of a horse by Phidias and Praxiteles to many living horses. See Baxandall, "Gaurino", 197–204.

31 Settis, "Continuità", 377, notes the opposition to the Thomistic definition of beauty, where *claritas* rises from *integritas*.

32 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 124, 207, notes the imaginative exercise involved in the contemplation of fragments and landscapes with ruins: "[it] points to a greater wholeness than would any complete works".

33 See ibid., 201, 206, on Michelangelo's purported defacement of his early sculptures (the *Satyr's Head* and *Sleeping Cupid*) and his 'unfinishing' of his works.



FIGURE 10.6 *Maarten van Heemskerck, Roman sketchbook, Casa Galli, Rome with Michelangelo's Bacchus, c. 1532–36.*

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79 D 2, FOL. 72R.

Codex Barberini 4424 provides Piranesi-like evocations of decay and, still earlier, the March frescoes in the Sala dei Mesi, Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara, show a fractured *all'antica* arch as well as fantastic, Flemish-style rock formations.³⁴ Mantegna above all provides masterful explorations of the fragmentary, damage, and forms created by chance, showing damage and other kinds of fortuitous change as part of the ornament of antiquity, manifesting the uniqueness of the historic object.³⁵ In the *Martyrdom of St Christopher* and the *Removal of the Body of St Christopher* in the Ovetari Chapel, Chiesa degli Eremitani, Padua, holes bored crudely through delicate relief frame a scene of blinding; the two *Saint Sebastian* paintings show the saint in a decayed arch, sculptural fragments piled at his feet. Sebastian's martyrdom, which shows a beautiful classical body broken by destructive violence, is framed by fragmented

34 See Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo*, on the levels of invention in antiquarian reconstruction or fantasy, including imagined details of damage; Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, 174–215, on representation of damage or restoration.

35 On the depiction of ruins in Mantegna's teacher Squarcione, and in Squarcione's student Marco Zoppo, see Brown, *Venice*, 140–41. For Mantegna's attention to *spolia*, see Esch, "Reuse of Antiquity", 25–26.



FIGURE 10.7 *Mantegna, Martyrdom of St Christopher, Ovetari Chapel, Chiesa degli Eremitani. Padua, 1448–57.*

COURTESY DIOCESI DI PADOVA, UFFICIO BENI CULTURALI.

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

antiquities.³⁶ In the Vienna *Saint Sebastian*, where Mantegna's signature is carved as a Greek inscription into decayed pier, a distant cloud has the form of a horse and rider—an allusion to the Aristotelian discussion of chance forms seen by the fantasy in clouds or stains.³⁷

The cloud in *Saint Sebastian* can be regarded as an allusion to the role of the fantasy in an antiquarian view of art, centred on the individual, the accidental and the possibility of imagining transformations of objects. Mantegna's interest in accidental forms or change is rooted in his understanding that art as imitation of antiquity produces endless plays between verisimilitude and illusionist regress as one art imitates another. This appears in his repeated representational 'doublings'—of man and statues of men in *Saint Sebastian*,

36 See Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 55, 155 for suggestion that the marble foot beside the saint in the Paris *Saint Sebastian* was copied from a cast of a statue. On artists' study collections and Squarcione's cast and antiquities collection, see *ibid.*, 52, 55–56, 58.

37 Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 268, suggests the inscription denotes a *paragone* between Mantegna and the sculptors of antiquity. On forms made by chance, see Chapter 11; Summers, *Michelangelo*, 122–25; H.W. Janson, "The 'Image made by Chance' in Renaissance Thought", *De artibus opuscula*, 254–266; Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*. (London: Phaidon, 1977), 154–69.



FIGURE 10.8 *Mantegna, Saint Sebastian, c. 1460. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.*

PHOTO: KHM MUSEUMSVERBAND.



FIGURE 10.9 Mantegna, *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome*, 1506.

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of sculpted and 'real' festoons, sculpted putti and 'real' putti in the San Zeno altarpiece. The modulation of the architectural frame into a pergola in the *Madonna della Vittoria* or Mantegna's funerary chapel in Sant'Andrea is not only naturalistic depiction but an 'actualisation' as sculpted decoration turns into the vegetation it represents.

This imitation of art by art is conspicuous in Mantegna's pseudo-*spolia*—his late grisaille paintings simulating bronze or marble relief against a coloured, veined ground, following a Plinian notion of art as adding value to a precious material.³⁸ The largest panel, *The Triumph of Scipio* or *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele to Rome* (National Gallery, London, 1506), depicts exhibition of *spolia* and is itself an image of a *spolium*. The tension in triumph between universal imperium, symbolised by the *Dea natura*, and fragmentation, is expressed with great economy.³⁹ Mantegna makes it very clear that imitation of the antique is its transformation by the artist's imagination—including the transformation of the naturalistic into the artificial and fantastic.

38 These fictive marble panels depict *Judith*, *David*, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, *Judgement of Solomon* and *Samson and Delilah*; the 'bronze' panels show *Judith* and *Dido*. On their relation to the reliefs of Tullio Lombardo, see Keith Christiansen, "Paintings in Grisaille", in *Mantegna*, ed. Martineau, 394–416; for their place in a *paragone* on the virtues of sculpture and painting, see Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 154–57.

39 The painting is based on Ovid, *Fasti* IV.247–348, where it is prophesied that Hannibal will be pushed from Italy if the *magna mater* is brought from Mount Ida to Rome. Cf. Appian, *Roman History* IX.56 on Scipio Nasica as the worthiest man of Rome who was to receive the goddess. The work was painted for Francesco Cornaro, who claimed descent from the *gens* Cornelia and thus from Scipio; Campbell, "Vasari's Renaissance", 60, notes that it was destined for a *studiolo*. Mantegna's grisaille cycle for the Cornaro was continued after his death in 1506 by Bellini in his *Continence of Scipio* (post 1506, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC); see Brown, *Venice*, 252–53.

The damaged antique ornament shows the contrast of form and formlessness within the object itself, as a historical sign. Antiquities show the survival of form in tension with deforming decay; damage can also be perceived as a kind of enhancement which shows the pathos, historicity and uniqueness of the object. The damaged, unique object differs from the association of species with ornament in discussions of *exornatio mundi*. It is important to reiterate that if ornament is associated with antique fragments, it is associated with accidental qualities. This leads to questions of how unique particulars may be integrated into larger structures and how they become types or modules. Here we come to the tension, or progression, from the interest in *spolia* to the development of ornate style.

Materials and Motifs

The collection and reuse of antique architectural ornaments was certainly not unique to the Renaissance.⁴⁰ Nor was the complex temporality of an antiquarian culture; the theme of recovered or revered antiquity as something ‘new’ appears in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* III.14.2 (“vetustas novi adoranda est”) and Cassiodorus, *Variae* VII.15, extolling “nova gloria vetustatis”.⁴¹ Late antique buildings, notably the Arch of Constantine and Early Christian churches used *spolia*, which Hansen has likened to the respect for *vetustas* in Macrobius, and the *cento*, created from the fragmentation and reconstitution of an

40 See Friedrich Deichmann, “Säule und Ordnung in der frühchristlichen Architektur”, *Römische Mitteilungen* 55 (1940), 114–30; Settis “Continuità”, 383–85, on ‘mutilation’ of classical texts to make them suitable for Christian use; Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); idem, *The Survival of Roman Antiquities in the Middle Ages*, esp. 214–16, 239–47; Lucilla de Lachnal, *Spolia: Uso e reimpiego dell’antico dal III al XIV secolo* (Milan: Longanesi, 1995); Arnold Esch “Spolien. Zur Wiederverwendung antiker Baustücke und Skulpturen im mittelalterlichen Italien”, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969), 1–64; Dale Kinney, “Roman Architectural Spolia”, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 145, (2001), 138–61; Beat Brenk, *Architettura e immagini del sacro nella tarda antichità* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 2005), 195–220; *Antike Spolien; Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell’alto medioevo. 16–21 aprile 1998*, ed. Joachim Poeschke, 2 vols. (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1999); Jaś Elsner, “From the Culture of *Spolia* to the Cult of Relics: the Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms”, *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000), 149–84; Brown, *Venice*.

41 Brenk, *Architettura*, 205–219.

existing text.⁴² Hansen associates the use of *spolia* with the *renovatio imperii* and with Rome, where the use of *spolia* continued after it had been replaced elsewhere by Gothic architecture.⁴³ She insists that translation, also in its sense of metaphor (*translatio*) was central to the meaning of *spolia*.⁴⁴ Hansen also links *spolia* to Augustinian discussions of oppositions and contraries harmonised, seeing the use of heterogeneous materials as a way of reflecting universal order.⁴⁵

Ausonius compared a *cento* to a game (*stomachion*) where geometric figures made from bone fragments are rearranged to make pictures, yet the *cento* involves fragmentation of something which still exists in its integrity rather than compositions of things which exist only as fragments. This distinction is fundamental to the difference between literary citation and material *spolia*, which involve damage to the original fabric.⁴⁶

We saw the interest in marbles and mosaic in Crinito, Perotti, and the *Hypnerotomachia*.⁴⁷ The exotic names of stones, their distinction by colour and their use in inlay offered analogies with the *ornamenta dicendi* and their successful insertion. Alberti wrote about mosaic as a figure for the recovery of classical learning and deployed exquisite marble inlay in the façade of Santa

42 Maria Fabricius Hansen, *The Eloquence of Appropriation. Prolegomena to an Understanding of Spolia in Early Christian Rome* (Rome: Bretschneider, 2003), 156, 169, 172. Reuse of antique elements appears in late antique pagan monuments, such as the Temple of Saturn and the Porticus Deorum Consentium, but becomes more charged with Christianity; Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 11.40.60 compares the Israelites stealing precious goods from Egypt to Christian use of pagan learning. On the *cento*, see McGill, *Virgil Recomposed*; Bert Selter, "Architecture and Poetry. The Letter of Raphaël to Pope Leo x and the Introductions to a few Humanist Editions of Constantinian Poetry", *Camenae* 6 (June 2009), <http://www.paris-sorbonne.fr/IMG/pdf/Selter/pdf>, retrieved 14 July 2012.

43 Hansen, *Eloquence*, 196, 238. She notes Suger's attempts to acquire Roman columns for the narthex of Saint Denis (*ibid.*, 203). On Rome's love and preservation of its antiquities, see Procopius, *Gothic War* IV.22.5–6.

44 Hansen, *Eloquence*, 178–79. See *ibid.*, 19, 170, for comparison of *spolia* to Macrobius' bee topos (*Saturnalia* I, preface 5–6); this overlooks the distinction between blending in the bee topos, and the excerpting and reordering of materials in an encyclopaedia or *cento*. *Saturnalia* I, Preface 7–9, gives other metaphors for blending: perfume, voices in a choir, a single number formed from various numbers and digestion.

45 Hansen, *Eloquence*, 172–77.

46 See Paolo Liverani, "Reading *Spolia* in Late Antiquity and Contemporary Perception" in *Reuse Value*, 33–51.

47 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 188, cites Raniero Gnoli, *Marmora romana* (Rome: Edizioni dell' Elefante, 1971, 2nd edn 1988), 96, on the fictitious or literary (Plinian) sources of the stones named in the *Hypnerotomachia*.

Maria Novella and in the Rucellai chapel. Another aspect of the ornamental stones-speech analogy concerns the epigram, linked to mosaic through the *emblema* and the use of *tituli* in early church mosaics. The interests in mosaic, inlay and marble suggest the influence of Byzantine traditions in architectural *ekphrasis* channelled by figures such as Chrysoloras, but these traditions could also be explored through study of the early churches of Rome as repositories of antiquities. The Sistine papacy saw the restoration and building of churches and a high point in the Roman interest in Greek Patristics which had been promoted earlier by Ambrogio Traversari and Nicholas v—an interest in which translation of Philo and Basil's *Hexaemeron* figured prominently.⁴⁸ The Roman Humanists engaged in this wave of translations included Byzantine émigrés like Bessarion and Trapezuntius as well as Perotti. Trapezuntius' son Andreas, private secretary to Sixtus iv, extolled the Cosmatesque pavement of the Sistine Chapel in his preface to his father's commentary to Ptolemy's *Almagest*.⁴⁹ Using the Byzantine language of wonder and bewilderment, he claims that floor outdoes the vermiculated pavements of the antique mosaicists.

The Sistine pavement is one example of the revival of Cosmatesque work, regarded in the fifteenth century as ancient, and mosaic in the later Quattrocento and early Cinquecento.⁵⁰ Other examples include the Bufalini

48 On the “conscious paleo-Christian revival” in Quattrocento Rome, see Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 226, 228–34 on the preservation of the Greek Fathers and the translations of Basil's *Hexaemeron*; Stinger, “Greek Patristics and Christian Antiquity in Renaissance Rome”, in *Rome in the Renaissance*, 153–69. On the translation of Philo (completed 1484) by Lilio Tifernate, at the encouragement of Bessarion, see Stinger, “Greek Patristics”, 155–56; the *Hexaemeron* was translated twice, by Lampugnino Birago (d. 1472), at the order of Paul II, and by Argyropoulos (brought to Rome from Florence in 1471), presented to Sixtus iv. Basil's *Hexaemeron* was already available in the Latin version of Eustathius Afer (fl. 440).

49 John Monfasani, “A Description of the Sistine Chapel under Pope Sixtus iv”, *Artibus et historiae* 4, 7 (1983), 11–12; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 170.

50 See *ibid.*, 170–71, 201 on Giotto's use of Cosmati pattern in fresco; Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 185–94. They note that the symbols depicted on the metopes of Bramante's Tempietto are based on the coloured inlays on the arcades of Santa Sabina, depicted also by Filippino Lippi in the frieze of the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva (1487). Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 130, sees that the vaults of the Carafa Chapel and the Sala del credo, Borgia Apartments, Vatican (1493), by Pinturicchio and assistants, as modelled on Cosmati pavements. On Cosmatesque pavement, see Edward Hutton, *The Cosmati: The Roman Marble Workers of the XII and XIII centuries* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1950); Dorothy Glass, *Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements* (Oxford: BAR, 1980); Peter Claussen, *Magistri doctissimi Romani:*

and Crucifixion Chapels, Santa Maria in Aracoeli, the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato, Florence, the Chapel of the Belvedere, Bramante's Tempietto at San Pietro in Montorio, and the Vatican Stanze. Giovanni Rucellai in his *Zibaldone* notes the porphyry objects and mosaic in Roman churches he visited in 1450, distinguishing vegetal ornament ("fogliami") from other forms of inlay and revetment.⁵¹ The mosaics of the cupola and vault of Santa Costanza, with their birds, beasts, "spiritegli" and "fogliami" excited his particular admiration as the most beautiful mosaic in Rome, if not in the world.⁵² The "fogliami" of the Santa Costanza vault mosaics appear in the Codex Escorialensis, as do the mosaics of ss Cosmas and Damian, San Marco, the Lateran Baptistery and portico of San Venanzio.⁵³

Peruzzi designed a mosaic ceiling for the Jerusalem or Helena Chapel in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme; fictive mosaic is used by Mantegna (*Camera picta*), Pinturicchio (Basso della Rovere Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo), Peruzzi (Ponzetti Chapel, Santa Maria della Pace, Sala di Galatea, Farnesina), and by Raphael in the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura. Jacopo Ripanda, an exponent of the "antiquarian" style in Rome, was a mosaic restorer in Orvieto until 1495.⁵⁴ Gold ground mosaic also revived in Florence, in Baldinovetti's work on the Baptistery in 1435 and 1455, the Ghirlandaio brothers' restoration and execution of mosaic and Lorenzo de' Medici's mosaic collection.⁵⁵ Benedetto da Maiano's bust of Giotto in Florence cathedral (1490), shows him

Die römischen Marmorkünstler des Mittelalters (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1987); Paloma Ayuela, *Cosmatesque Ornament: Flat Polychrome Patterns in Architecture*, trans. Maria Alvarez (New York: Norton, 2001); Angela Dressen, *Pavimenti decorati del Quattrocento in Italia* (Venice: Marsilio, 2008).

51 Giovanni Rucellai ed *il suo Zibaldone* I, "Il Zibaldone Quaresimale", excerpts ed. Alessandro Perosa (London: Warburg Institute, 1960), 67–78.

52 Ibid., 74: "il più vacho [vago], gratio et gentile musiaco non che di Roma, ma di tutto il mondo". Rucellai speaks of precious materials and vegetal ornament as "gentilezze".

53 The mosaics of Santa Costanza, labelled "Templum Bacchi extra muros", are drawn in watercolour and ink by Francisco de Holanda, *Antigualhas*, 22r, 27v. The lunette decoration of the *Flagellation* attributed to Pedro Fernández (San Paolo fuori le mura) shows *fogliami* against a mosaic ground, suggesting Santa Costanza; see Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura*, 17.

54 Ibid.

55 See Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic*, 130–31, 345, on the Laurentian revival of mosaic in Florence; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 174–77, on the *Annunciation* mosaics above the Porta della mandorla in the Duomo and in Santissima Annunziata, begun 1509 by Davide Ghirlandaio and completed by his nephew Ridolfo, who painted the vaults of the Cappella dei Priori in Palazzo Vecchio with fictive mosaic. Wohl notes Filarete's description of mosaic in the

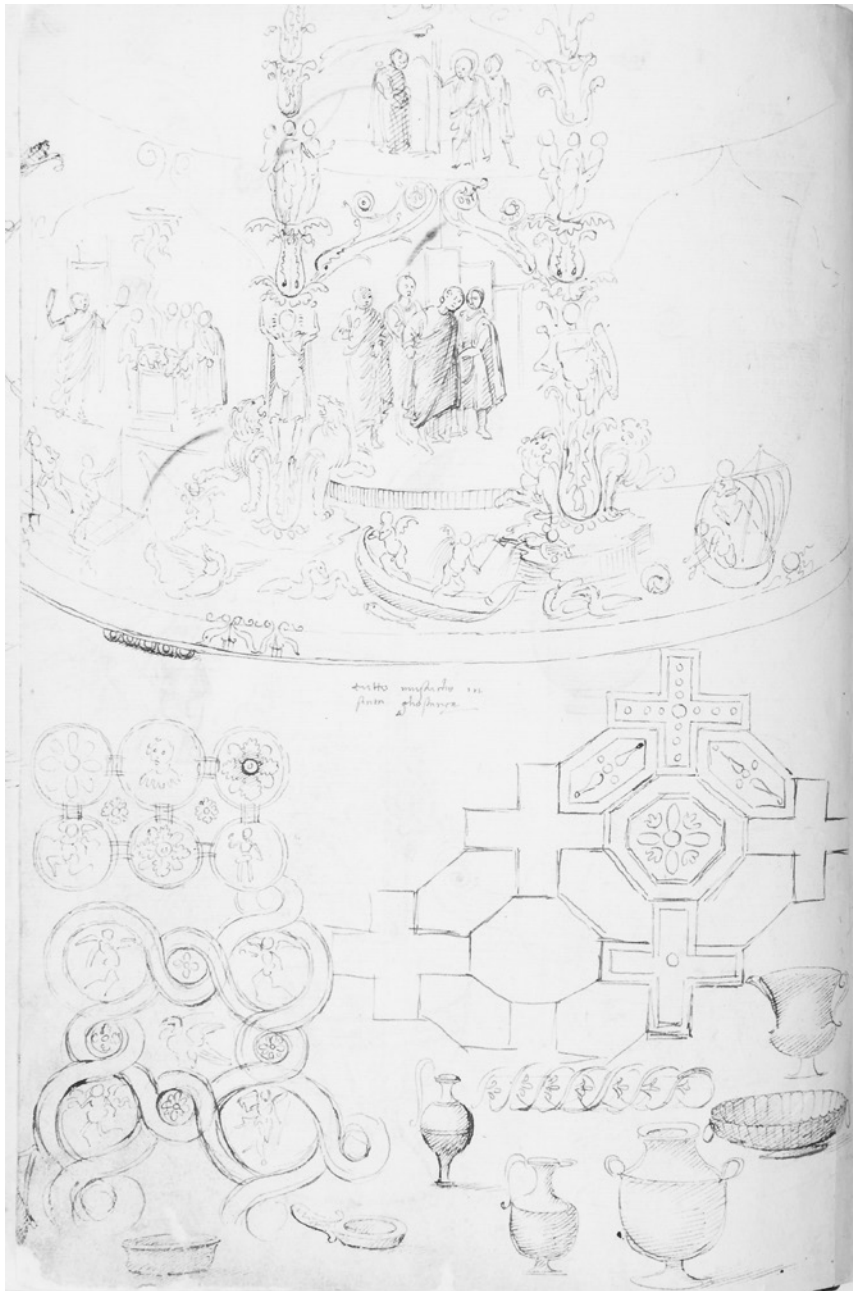


FIGURE 10.10 *Vault mosaic, Santa Costanza, Codex Escorialensis, fol. 4v, before 1509. Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.*

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making a mosaic; the monumental inscription is an epigram by Poliziano celebrating Giotto for returning dead painting to life, and comparing his name to a long poem.⁵⁶

The interest in Byzantine artefacts is also evident in the Byzantine ivories and micromosaics belonging to Julius II and Perotti, or the luxurious antiques collected by Paul II; like Cosmatesque mosaic, such objects were erroneously believed to be antique.⁵⁷ A critical description by one of the Franciscan Fraticelli of Paul's papal tiara, whose jewels seemed to blaze around the pope's head, recalls (inadvertently or ironically) descriptions by Corippus and late antique panegyrics of the jewels whose glitter shows the aura of imperial sanctity.⁵⁸ Such Byzantine display was rejected also by contemporary Humanists, like the members of Pomponio Leto's Roman academy whom Paul II imprisoned.

The interest in an antique style involving precious materials and mosaic thus could work at various levels.⁵⁹ It provided a fertile analogy with the Humanists' textual studies, which could give form to their ends. It tallied with a conception of art found in Pliny and Ovid as precious material enhanced by artifice.⁶⁰ It showed the adaptation of antiquities in the Early Christian *renovatio* of ancient classical culture. It was an area where the artistic-rhetorical culture of the Byzantines could illuminate an ancient Roman tradition. It exhibited continuity with a long-standing symbolic understanding of precious materials and with the depiction of material transmutation as appropriate to the operation of the divine.⁶¹ As Settis noted, altarpieces showing the Nativity (or John the Baptist's prophecy of Christ's Coming) provided a typological occasion for the display of luxurious, ruinous architecture which fragmented antique remains

vault of the Cathedral of Sforzinda, where gold rays on a blue ground represent divine majesty.

56 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic*, 123–33.

57 Ibid., 96–107, 185–94. On Paul II's antiques, see Christian, *Empire*, 93–103.

58 Ibid., 103. Paul's regalia has been seen as a reaffirmation of the imperial majesty of the papacy in response to Valla's discrediting of the Donation of Constantine.

59 For Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic*, the revival of mosaic or painted mosaic represents one aspect of Renaissance artistic historicist consciousness.

60 See *Metamorphoses* II.5, “materiam superabat opus”, describing the palace of the sun.

61 For an almost Byzantine gilded frame and painted architecture, see Bernardino Butone and Bernardo Zenale, *St Martin Altarpiece* (1485–1507), Treviglio (Bergamo), Collegiata di San Martino; for gilt relief panels, see Ghirlandaio, *St Vincent Ferrer Altarpiece* (1493–94, Rimini, Museo civico) and Lorenzo Costa, *Ghedini Altarpiece* (1497, Bologna, San Giovanni in Monte), Ercole de'Roberti, *Ravenna Altarpiece* (1480, Milan, Brera). Cosme Tura's *Roverella Altarpiece* (1474, London, National Gallery), shows the most startling material transformations, with its metallised grapes and architectural ornaments.

into a series of decorative elements or motifs while suggesting the nature of ancient remains in their totality.⁶² Ghirlandaio's Tornabuoni Chapel frescoes illustrate this approach with their combination of opulent detail (coloured marbles, gilded *grotesche* intarsia, reliefs in metal and on mosaic grounds), often resembling the drawings of Giuliano da Sangallo, and projections of monumental complexes.⁶³

All'antica ornament in precious materials also made a fitting representation of the illumination of fame, seen in use of porphyry in Florentine tombs, notably the Santa Croce monuments of Bruni (Bernardo and Antonio Rossellini, c. 1445) and Marsuppini (Desiderio da Settignano, c. 1455–59), in Verrocchio's tomb of Piero and Giovanni de' Medici the Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, c. 1469–72, and in the painted marble panels of Castagno's *Last Supper* and *Famous Men* cycles.⁶⁴ If durable marbles could denote the 'eternity' of fame, they also imply an aesthetic linked to accidentals, such as the patterns made by veining.

In late antique *spolia* we see loss of formal integrity as a condition of cultural continuity.⁶⁵ Humanist fascination with mosaic as a means of recovery exists in tension with the project of restitution, and the recreation of totalities. This is most obvious in the distinction between a *spolia* or mosaic tradition where antiquities are immured in an architectural setting, and the recreation of a canon of types in figural sculpture and the containing architecture.⁶⁶

62 Settis, "Continuità". See Cimo da Conegliano, *St John the Baptist and Saints* (c. 1493–95), Venice, Madonna dell'orto, which shows John preaching in a ruined arcade whose spandrels have mosaic decoration and relief roundels.

63 For Giuliano da Sangallo as the source for the painted architecture, see Chapter 8, n. 93; Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, discusses the links between Ghirlandaio and da Sangallo, for example in the *all'antica* decoration of the tombs of the Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinità, Florence, based however on attribution of the Codex Escurialensis to Ghirlandaio and his workshop.

64 See also the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal, San Miniato al Monte (Antonio Rossellini, 1466) and Mino da Fiesole's tomb of Bernardo Giugni, Badia Fiorentina c. after 1466–69). See Wohl *Aesthetics*, 179–82, 187–88, on the care taken by Mantegna and Castagno in distinguishing types of marbles and Piero della Francesca's use of painted porphyry and serpentine in the *Flagellation* and *Discovery of the True Cross* cycles. On the back of Leonardo's *Ginevra de' Benci* porphyry appears alongside palm, laurel and the homonymous juniper with the motto *virtutem forma decorat*. The Venetian Franciscan church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli is the outstanding example for Quattrocento marble revetment decoration.

65 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 133 cites Riegl on late Roman art, where the salient form is the individual form isolated from contextual space.

66 See Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic*, 180–84.



FIGURE 10.11 Ghirlandaio, *Annunciation to Zaccariah*, *Tornabuoni Chapel*, *Santa Maria Novella*, Florence, 1486–90.

COURTESY PREFETTURA DI FIRENZE PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

We shall suggest a similar movement in art to that traced above in literature, from Humanist fascination with mosaic, miscellany and the particular (evident also in Valla's dialectic) to the continuum of artifice set out in Castiglione. Castiglione reappears here, as the reputed co-author with Raphael of the '1519' letter to Leo X, where *spolia* are treated as a sign of the degeneration of late antique art and the proper study of antique art described as the recreation of whole things, from a defined period in antiquity, up to the period of Gothic invasion.⁶⁷ The letter illustrates Settis' distinction between antiquity as

67 Reproduced in Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti*, 78–92; John Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources 1483–1602* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 500–45. The letter was known and attributed to Castiglione in Marliani's *Vita di Castiglione* (1584) and exists in three versions: a draft in Castiglione's hand, preserved in Mantua, a version published in the *Opere* of Castiglione (Padua: Francesconi-Volpato, 1733) from a lost source, and a third manuscript, discovered in Munich in 1834. Golzio suggests that the Munich manuscript is the first draft, corrected by Castiglione in the published version; Shearman, *Raphael*, dates the Mantua letter c. 1516 and the published version 1519, in revision of his dating to



FIGURE 10.12 *Desiderio da Settignano, Tomb of Carlo Marsuppini, Santa Croce, Florence, 1455–59.*
 COURTESY MINISTERO DELL'INTERNO—
 DIPARTIMENTO PER LE LIBERTÀ CIVILI E
 L'IMMIGRAZIONE—DIREZIONE CENTRALE
 PER L'AMMINISTRAZIONE DEL FONDO
 EDIFICI DI CULTO.
 PHOTO: SAILKO, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY 2.5.

auctoritas, where fragments point to a whole which is unrecoverable but normative, with antiquity as *vetustas*, where a lost whole to which each fragment points can be reconstructed, but also adapted to different contexts.⁶⁸

Settis argues that a shift from *auctoritas* to *vetustas* appears in the Renaissance. The transition from *spolia* to classical model however involved a great deal of continuity and accommodation. We shall suggest that it was accomplished only through reliance on theatre as urban paradigm and through *grottesche* as the major means of ornamental design. The problems entailed by this reliance will become evident.

The “Leo x” Letter

The archaeological project set out in the letter to Leo x challenges the notion of antiquity as a treasury of antique fragments to be ‘set’ in various contexts. Amongst the destruction of antiquity it deplores is that of the previous decade, when buildings were destroyed and columns, friezes and architraves reduced to fragments.⁶⁹ Antiquities are not to be gathered and accommodated as spoils but to provide the basis for a project of reconstruction, based on scientific

c. 1513–14 in “Codex Escorialensis”, *Master Drawings* 15, 2 (1977), 136–39. Christof Thoenes, “La ‘Lettera’ a Leone X”, in *Raffaello a Roma*, 373–81, regards Munich as Raphael’s revision of a letter drafted with Castiglione. The last page of Munich has a note sketching chapters on the orders and perspective, which Thoenes sees as an anticipation of Serlio’s Fourth and Second Books. See also F. di Teodoro, *Raffaello, Castiglione e la Lettera a Leo x* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1994); Arnold Nesselrath, “Raphael’s Archaeological Method”, *Raffaello a Roma*, 357–71; Stefano Ray, *Raffaello architetto*, 268. The attribution to Raphael rests on his reputed survey of Roman remains at the behest of Leo x, described in the letter and noted by Calcagnini, Giovio, Castiglione, Andrea Fulvio, Marcantonio Michiel, Evangelista Fausto Maddalena de’ Capodiferro and Caio Silvio Germanico; see F. Castagnoli, “Raffaello e le antichità di Roma”, in *Raffaello. L’opera, le fonti, la fortuna* (Novara: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1968), 11, 571–86; S. Valtieri and E. Bentivoglio, “Sanzio sovrintendente. Una lettera inedita di Raffaello”, in *L’architettura. Cronache e storia*, 17, 7 (1971), 476–84. Raphael in a 1514 letter to Fabio Calvo speaks of searching for antiquities with Andrea Fulvio, and drawing them by order of Leo x. Documents of the 1530s mention drawings of ancient Rome by Raphael; the Fabio Calvo 1527 maps of Rome, repr. in Amato Frutaz, *Le Pianta di Roma* (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1962), 1, 51–54; 11, pls. 16–19 are thought to be the product of the survey.

68 Settis, “Continuità”, 483–84.

69 Golzio, *Raffaello*, 83. The destruction of the Meta Romuli in the Via Alexandrina (Borgo Nuovo), of the arch at the Baths of Diocletian and the temple of Ceres in Via Sacra are condemned.

surveying, which would create integral representations.⁷⁰ The exhaustive character of charting and documenting all antique material remains would be proposed again by the Vitruvian academy, as outlined by Claudio Tolomei; the closest it came to realisation in the Cinquecento was the *Libro dell'antichità* of Pirro Ligorio.⁷¹ The encyclopaedic study of antique remains appeared in the flowering of drawings and engravings of coins, trophies, *grottesche*, friezes, capitals, cornice and base studies associated with Raphael's workshop.⁷²

The synchronic project outlined in the Leo x letter involves the selection of a privileged historical period which provides the exemplary forms that become 'timeless' exemplars.⁷³ This is sketched in the celebrated analysis of the decline of Roman art at the hands of time, barbarians and the papacy, including the most recent popes—the last implying rejection of the *spolia* tradition of Roman church building. When the letter refers to the "spoglie di Traiano e d'Antonino Pio" in the Arch of Constantine their excellence contrasts with the lack of art and quality in the later sculpture.⁷⁴ The use of *spolia* is a sign of degeneration rather than conferring authority or signalling continuity; this attitude continues with Vasari's comments on *spoglie* on the Arch of Constantine and the degeneration of sculpture from the age of Constantine.⁷⁵

The letter, with its three phases of creation, decline and renovation, thus states rejection of the post-classical past to be the condition of the renovation of antiquity. Here we have the deliberate rupture with the past which distinguished the Renaissance from previous 'renascences' in Panofsky's terms. The combination of disruption and renovation in the Theodosian Code creates

70 See *ibid.*, 87–89, for the method of surveying which forms the basis of architectural projection, consisting in plan, elevation and section.

71 Claudio Tolomei, letter to Count Agostino de' Landi (November 1542), repr. SAC III, 3037–3048, recounts the project by the Accademia della Virtù (Tolomei's "Vitruvian Academy") to make a comprehensive study of Roman buildings and material remains.

72 See Nesselrath, "I libri di disegni", 129–34; Shearman, "Codex Escorialensis", on the derivation of the Codex Escorialensis, with its drawings of Early Christian mosaic, from Raphael's workshop.

73 Similar classicising tendencies appear in poetics at the same time with Girolamo Vida's *De arte poetica* (1518), which extols Virgil as universal exemplar, in Bembo's advancement of Petrarchism in the *volgare* and the spread of Ciceronianism into an international debate. Alexander Pope in the *Essay in Criticism*, ll. 697–704, links Vida and Raphael in "Leo's golden days".

74 Golzio, *Raffaello*, 85.

75 Vasari, Proemio alle Vite, *Vite* I, 14; see Alchermes, "*Spolia*", 167–68. On the *spoglie* of the Arch of Constantine and the uneven quality of its sculpture, see also Bernardo Gamucci, *Le antichità della città di Roma* (Venice: Giovanni Varisco, 1569), 44r–44v.

a distinction between representational content and *ornatus*, with the last essential to the dignity and decorum of the public sphere and the continuity of civic institutions but emancipated from specific meaning. This emancipation is the condition of its survival. In the letter to Leo x the split is made within the sphere of *ornatus* itself. The idea of continuity with antique tradition is rejected in place of a selected model which will serve as the basis of recreations. This in turn results in the distinction between architecture, which retained its excellence until the days of the last emperors, and figurative art, which, like literature, instead showed a long decline.⁷⁶

The harmonizing of a medieval, aggregative topography by means of ornamental features like porticoes and friezes with antiquarian motifs, such as appears in Bolognese architecture, for example, or in the Marcanova illustrations, would be unacceptable in terms of the letter. While the letter deplores the aggressive urbanism of previous Renaissance popes, it responds to the interest in the mobility of sculptural collections which could be moved, rehoused and regrouped to serve political and spectacular ends, rather than immured in a location.⁷⁷ *Spolia* submerge distinctions between artwork, ornament and architecture; the Leo x letter stresses these distinctions and differentiates the historic significance, aesthetic values and design process of each art.

The letter thus argues for the separation of the arts as a condition for their stylistic integration. Applied ornament is not rejected in itself, as shown by Raphael's influential project for Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, with its stucco reliefs and statue niches, which has been seen as the first example of the "facciata museo", the façade-museum; the design influenced later palace façades decorated with statuary and pseudo-*spolia*, such as Bartolomeo Baronino's Palazzo Capodiferra-Spada and Palladio's Palazzo Barbaran da Porto and Loggia del Capitano in Vicenza.⁷⁸ The applied ornament and the statues suggest the influence of triumphal arches as a model for palace façades; the ornamental use of masks, medallions, trophies, reliefs and statuary is approved if the building is

76 Golzio, *Raffaello*, 85.

77 On drawings of statues in private collections in late Quattrocento-early Cinquecento sketchbooks, see Rushton, *Sketchbooks*, 108–11.

78 See Christian, "Architecture"; Pier Nicola Pagliara, "Palazzo Branconio" in Frommel, Tafuri, Ray, *Raffaello architetto*, 197–216. Pagliara demonstrates the derivation of the façade from Trajan's Markets. See Nicole Dacos and Caterina Furlan, *Giovanni da Udine 1487–1561* (Udine: Casamassima, 1987), 93, for attribution of the stucco ornament to Giovanni da Udine. On the "facciata museo", see Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna, "Il Possesso di Leone x. Il trionfo delle prospettive," in *La Festa a Roma dal Rinascimento al 1870*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo (Rome and Turin: Umberto Allemandi and J. Sands, 1997), 1, 48.

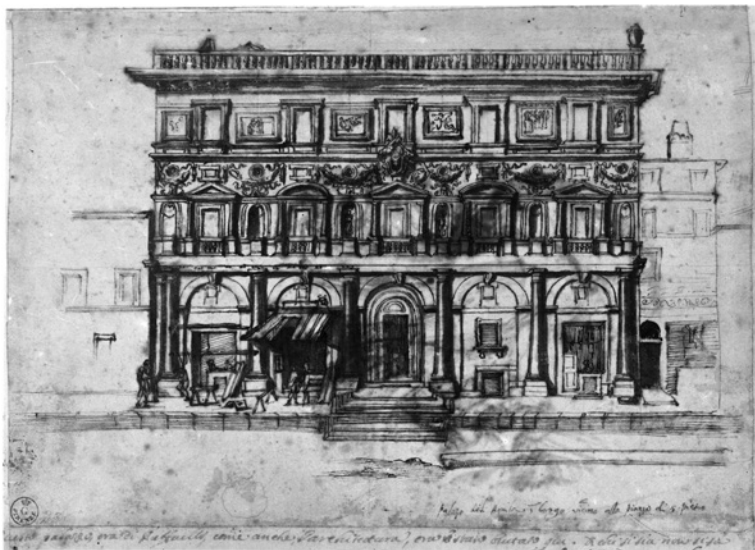


FIGURE 10.13 Naldini, drawing (c. 1560) of Raphael, Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila, Rome, 1517–18. Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, 230Ar.
PHOTO: GDSU.

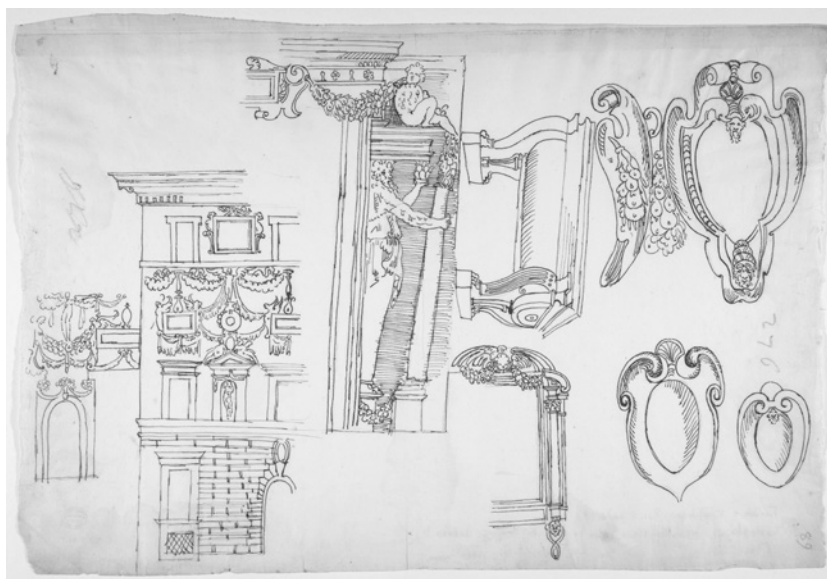


FIGURE 10.14 Palazzo Capodiferra-Spada, Rome. French anon. 16th century drawing. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Gift of Janos Scholz and Anne Bigelow Scholz, in memory of Flying Officer Walter Bigelow Rosen, RCAF, 1949.
PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

designed as a stylistically unified whole.⁷⁹ Armenini suggested the close links between triumphal arches and the *facciata museo* of ancient houses whose reliefs, *spoglie* and statues celebrated the *gesta* of the family.⁸⁰ The “facciata museo” could also show considerable overlap with older *spolia* displays; in the courtyard of Palazzo della Valle di Mezzo antique relief fragments were displayed as a continuous frieze.⁸¹

“Spoglie di Traiano e d’Antonino Pio” are imitated directly in the fictive reliefs and trophies painted by Jacopo Ripanda and possibly Peruzzi for Raffaele Riario in the Bishop of Ostia’s palace (1511–13), based on Ripanda’s studies of Trajan’s column.⁸² Hall contrasts Ripanda’s copying of Trajanic reliefs with Raphael’s assistant Polidoro da Caravaggio who “evolved a *style* based on antique relief”.⁸³ The decoration of façades with frescoed reliefs showing trophies, triumphs and battle scenes which he executed with Maturino da Firenze transformed the aggregate disposition of *spolia* into a display of illusionistic relief.⁸⁴

What is condemned in *spolia* is in short their historical eclecticism as a sign of stylistic disjunction rather than their applied character. Later Cinquecento villas like Villa Giulia and Villa Medici in Rome used antique *spolia* on garden façades but display them in a unified ‘classical’ context; the antiquities arranged over the façades of inner courts or gardens (the Hanging Garden in

79 See Pagliara, “Palazzo Branconio”, 200, on influence of the triumphal arch and on the collection of antiquities displayed in the palazzo.

80 Armenini, *De’ veri precetti della pittura* (1586), ed. Gorreri (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), III.14, 228–31, discussed in Ingo Herklotz, “Antiquities in the Palaces: Aristocratic, Antiquarian and Religious”, in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace*, 237–8. Herklotz, *ibid.*, notes the Arch of Trajan in Benevento as a model for narrative symmetry in decoration.

81 See *ibid.*; Christian, “Architecture and Antique Sculpture in Early Modern Rome”.

82 See Farinella, *Archeologia*; Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 146–47, 291–92, n. 229, on Ripanda’s studies of Trajan’s Column and Peruzzi’s involvement. Wohl likens the Ostia decorations to the frescoes of battles and naval battles in Palazzo Farnese, Gradoli, Viterbo (1521–24), which also bear similarities to a lost frieze on Palazzo Gaddi, Rome, by Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino. Armenini, *Precetti*, 230, praises Peruzzi’s painted facades.

83 Hall, *After Raphael*, 74.

84 The great popularity of Polidoro’s and Maturino’s decorations is attested in Vasari’s *Life*. See Alessandro Marabottini, *Polidoro da Caravaggio* (Roma: Edizioni dell’Elefante, 1969); Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Polidoro da Caravaggio: L’opera completa* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2001), 108–72, 494–503; Maurizio Marini, *Polidoro da Caravaggio: L’invidia e la fortuna* (Venice: Marsilio, 2005); Achim Gnann, *Polidoro da Caravaggio (um 1499–1543): Die römischen Innendekorationen* (Munich: Scaneg, 1997), 90–117. See Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 117–18, on Polidoro’s high reputation in the Cinquecento and Seicento as a master of Roman grand style.



FIGURE 10.15 *Pietro Santi Bartoli after Polidoro da Caravaggio, antique style naval scene, c. 1660–90. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Bequest of Phyllis Massar, 2011. PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.*

Palazzo della Valle, the Palazzo Mattei di Giove in the early seventeenth century) created sequestered *all'antica* environments, internal spaces or gardens which were also places of decorative license.⁸⁵ Their preciousness as antiquities is manifest but the stylistic whole is coherent to the point that they were mixed with contemporary stucco ornaments. The Casino of Pius IV in the Vatican, attributed to the artist and antiquarian Pirro Ligorio, integrated ancient statues into a complex of edifices lavishly adorned with *all'antica* stucco and mosaic.⁸⁶ *Spolia* ornament continues as a form of villa decoration into the seventeenth century (Villa Doria Pamphili, Villa Borghese, Casino

85 The *spolia* immured in the Villa Medici contained works from the Della Valle collection, assembled from the early decades of the Quattrocento and sold to Ferdinando de' Medici in 1584. See Christian, "Instauratio and Pietas", 33–65; Alessandro Cecchi and Carlo Gasparri, *La Villa Médicis* IV; *Le collezioni del cardinal Ferdinando. I dipinti e le sculture* (Rome: Académie de France à Rome, 2009); Bernard Toulhier et al., *La Villa Médicis* I, *Documentation et description*, (Rome: Académie de France à Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1989); Morel, *Villa Medici Académie de France à Rome* (Milan: Franco Maria Ricci, 1998), 17–23, pls. 39–45. The Villa Medici *spolia* included festoons and bucrania from the interior of the Ara pacis, acquired by the builder of the Villa, Cardinal Ricci in 1566; see *La Villa Médicis* I, 324–26; *La Villa Médicis* IV, 202–03, 212, 261–66, on other fragments of the processional frieze formerly in Medici collections. On *spolia* and new "antiquities" mingled in the courtyard of Palazzo Mattei, see Michael Koortbojian, "Renaissance *Spolia* and Renaissance Antiquity; One Neighbourhood, Three Cases", in *Reuse Value*, 149–65. Koortbojian notes that in creating *spolia* decoration, symmetry prevailed over antique authenticity. On the distinct design strategies in the Palazzo della Valle and Palazzo Mattei, see Herklotz, "Antiquities", 236, who attributes the design of the Palazzo Mattei courtyard to Carlo Maderno.

86 See Chapter 12.



FIGURE 10.16 *Garden façade, Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–87.*

COURTESY ACADEMIE DE FRANCE À ROME—VILLA MÉDICIS.

PHOTO: AUTHOR.

Rospigliosi, Villa del Pignetto Sacchetti, Casino di Villa Giustiniani Massimo) and has a revival with Piranesi and his profoundly theatrical and rhetorical conception of antiquarianism.⁸⁷

The Leo x letter also calls for an ornament to match the monumental architecture recovered with Bramante, and a return to the precious materials used in antique ornament.⁸⁸ Raphael appears to fulfil this in the Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, with its quotation of the Pantheon and Bramante's plans for

87 Herklotz, "Antiquities", 236–37, notes that the decorated façade endured into the seventeenth century better than the decorated courtyard.

88 "architecture today has been re-awakened and looks pretty much like the ancient manner of building, as we see in Bramante's many fine works. However, the ornaments are not of such precious material, as the ancients went to endless expense in realising what they imagined and by sheer will overcame every difficulty"; "a di nostri l'architettura sia molto svegliata et veduta assai proxima alla maniera delli antichi, come si vede per molte belle opere di Bramante, niente di meno li ornamenti non sono di materia tanto preziosa, come li antichi, che con infinita spesa par che mettessero ad effetto ciò che imaginarno e che solo el lor volere rompesse ogni difficultate", Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti*, 85. The passage appears only in the Munich manuscript, not in the later published version.

St Peter's.⁸⁹ The chapel harmonises small scale and elegant detail with monumental design which could be translated to large dimensions. It distinguishes itself from the delicate, miniaturised ornament of Pinturicchio and Bregno in the other chapels of Santa Maria del Popolo. The richness and diversity of materials harmonised in the coloured marbles and mosaic, the allusions to the exemplars of imperial and contemporary architecture, the incorporation of statuary, painting and mosaic suggest the view of architecture restored in its plan and ornament as described in the Leo x letter. The architecture and the ornament are conceived separately yet form a coherent whole; in this the chapel contrasts with the work of Pinturicchio and Bregno in the Basso della Rovere, Domenico della Rovere and Costa chapels of Santa Maria del Popolo, where delicate *fogliami* and *grotesche* are inserted into a context without forming a unity with the architectural space.⁹⁰

The work of artists who practised what Wohl terms the "ornate classical style" is implicitly castigated in the Leo x letter for its failure to match the monumentality of ancient building recovered by Bramante.⁹¹ The refined relief of Bregno, the triumphal fantasies of Ripanda, the *bizzarrie* of Amico Aspertini or Filippino Lippi and even the delicate *all'antica* ornament of so subtle a student of antiquities as Peruzzi exhibit attentiveness to the decorative detail of ancient fragments at the expense of their effectiveness in a monumental architectonic context. To this degree, they continue a *spolia* type approach to antique ornament, as precious fragments to be inserted rather than conceived in relation to their architectural setting. The interest in delicate, miniature forms in late Quattrocento ornament is also suggested by Vasari's remark that Mantegna's decorations in the Belvedere Chapel (1488–90), with their scintillating gold and small dimensions seemed more like illuminations than paintings.⁹² Wohl contrasts the Quattrocento taste for "multiplicity of component parts" with

89 See John Shearman, "The Cappella Chigi in Santa Maria del Popolo", *JWCI* 24 (1961), 129–60, who dates the Chapel c. 1513–16; Enzo Bentivoglio, "La capella Chigi", in *Raffaello architetto* 124–42; Ingrid Rowland, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's: Humanism and the Arts in the Patronage of Agostino Chigi", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 39, 4, (Winter 1986), 673–730; the essays in *Raffaello a Roma* of Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, "Cosmological Patterns in Raphael's Chigi Chapel", 127–57; Enzo Bentivoglio, "La Cappella Chigi: L'immagine ritrovata del secondo pannello bronzeo del monumento di Agostino, gli inediti precedenti artistici del mosaicista Luigi (da Pace) veneziano ed altre considerazioni", 309–14; Stefano Ray, "La Cappella Chigi: significato e cultura", 315–21.

90 See Chapter 11.

91 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 5, 115–52.

92 "La volta e le mura paiono più tosto cosa miniata che dipintura", Vasari, *Vita di Mantegna*, *Vite*, III, 553. See Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 154–58; Kristeller, *Mantegna*, 298–301.



FIGURE 10.17 *Raphael, Chigi Chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, commenced 1513.*
 PHOTO: FRANCESCO GASPARETTI, LICENSED UNDER
 CC-BY 2.0, DESATURATED FROM ORIGINAL.

the “greater homogeneity of sixteenth century interiors” through such techniques as monochrome illusionism, often executed through the design of a single artist.⁹³

This brings us to two related questions: the understanding of *varietas* and the kind of ornamentation which reconciles monumentality and particularity. The fantastic elaboration of accidental qualities, which made damage or chance appearances part of the ‘ornament’ of the antique object, appears to be precluded by the view of classical imitation as reconstruction of exemplars in their totality. In Raphael, *varietas* concerns the study of many models which are synthesised into a single style, whose principal model is the ‘universal’ exemplar of antiquity. This synthetic style is used to represent wholes which can accommodate and harmonise parts, not to invent pseudo-fragments. Thus *varietas* is fundamental to Raphael’s classicizing antiquarianism since it displays the relation of whole to part and the synthetic, harmonising power of

93 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 222, 226–31. Cf. Hall, “Classicism, mannerism, and the relief like style”, in *Cambridge Companion to Raphael* 223–36, on Raphael’s late style as based on the study of antique relief sculpture.

design. It is through the elaboration of *varietas* that ornament is enriched and illusionistic effects developed.

By the end of Raphael's career his workshop had developed a style whose 'universality' is proclaimed through its play of illusion; designs from Raphael's workshop were also executed by engravers such as Marcantonio Raimondi and Agostino Veneziano. The Sala di Costantino, with its images of the Church triumphant, exemplifies this style; here the fantasy inherent in illusionist painting becomes a subject of the decorations, which play with multiple levels of reference and counterfeit every conceivable mode of decoration.⁹⁴ The superimposed framing elements threaten to screen each other off—the fictive tapestries are shown curling back on themselves, so that we understand that their full extension would cover the neighbouring figures. Hall noted that in the Sala di Costantino “*everything* pretends to be something other than it is” and said of the colouring in Perino del Vaga's decorations in the Sala Paolina in Castel Sant'Angelo “it sets the mood for the creation of fantasy in which the materials transmogrify before our eyes”.⁹⁵ In the Sala di Costantino or the Sala Paolina triumphal organisation is problematised as decorated rooms are rendered as a configuration of competing inserts and coverings. As in Giulio Romano's Palazzo Tè decorations, various registers or means of decoration can be put in contrast or conflict, cultivating a playful tension between a complex, composite figuration of a *concetto* and competition between the levels of figuration. The potential for each level of decoration to upstage the other is held in tension with the *disegno* which controls the whole.⁹⁶ Freedberg expressed the experience of such decorations elegantly:

94 On the composite figurations in the decorated room after Raphael, see Hall, *After Raphael*; Catherine Dumont, *Francesco Salviati au Palais Sacchetti de Rome et la décoration murale italienne (1520–1560)* (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1973); Howard Burns, “Quelle cose antique et modern belle de Roma. Giulio Romano, the theatre and the antique”, in *Giulio Romano Architect* exh. cat., trans. Fabio Barry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129–42; Frederick Hartt, *Giulio Romano* (New York: Hacker, 1981), 1, 42–51; Wohl, *Renaissance Aesthetics*; Kliemann, *Gesta dipinte*; S.J. Freedberg, *Painting in Italy*, 132–42, on Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga. On Raphael as designer of the Sala di Costantino, and Giulio Romano's adjustments to create a more relief-like and ornate style, see Hall, *After Raphael* 42–48, 69–71. Stinger, *Rome in the Renaissance*, 247–48, discusses Roman Humanist interest in Constantine in relation to the decorations.

95 Hall, *After Raphael* 44; idem, *Colour and Meaning*, 192.

96 See S.J. Freedberg, in *Painting in Italy 1500–1600* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 132–42, on Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga; *ibid.*, 285–291, which reworks his “Observations on the Painting of Maniera”.



FIGURE 10.18 *Raphael, Giulio Romano and assistants. Sala di Costantino, Vatican, 1520, completed 1585.*

PHOTO: MUSEI VATICANI.

The multiple, disjunctive strands of meaning are presented to the spectator simultaneously and it is for his swift and sophisticated response to make a single tissue of experience of the whole . . . the spectator, not the artist, may be regarded as the agent who effects a synthesis.⁹⁷

We might contrast these Mannerist rooms with an earlier *sotto in su* decoration such as Mantegna's Camera picta, which shows the power of painting to portray living people, create spatial illusions and represent the splendours of antique ornament—medals, gold mosaic and “fogliami”.⁹⁸ Mantegna's tour de force shows painting's ability to imitate, vary and unify. In the Sala di Costantino the unifying visual illusion depicts a collage of representations but indicates that these are to be seen emblematically, as a configuration whose constituents are

97 Ibid., 291.

98 On the Camera picta, see Keith Christiansen, *Andrea Mantegna: Padua and Mantua* (New York: George Braziller, 1994); Starn and Partridge, *Arts of Power*, 81–148; Ames-Lewis *Intellectual Life*, 126.

themselves signs or images of other things. This movement from an illusionist mosaic of materials to an emblematic configuration appears explicitly in the Sala dei Cento Giorni, which presents itself as a development of the Sala di Costantino. The shift from mosaic to emblem could be viewed as a shift from a collage of fragmentary materials to a collage of fragmentary signs. The illusionist spectacle is based on the study of antiquities which are absorbed to the point where they can be transformed and recombined.⁹⁹ Each decoration offers the artist the chance to exhibit the range of transformations that can be accomplished through the painter's "idea", with its creation of illusions, metamorphoses and universal concepts.

Castiglione's and Raphael's distinction between architecture and ornament also implies that ornament need not be pseudo-structural, an idea developed by Giulio Romano in the tectonic fantasies at Palazzo Tè, where the illusionist freedom that grows from mastery of antique style is indeed displayed. The distinction is also contemporary with the emergence of the twofold models of invention and ornament we discussed above in such texts as *De copia*. While such comparisons should be made cautiously, there are certain parallels between the protean artifice of the ornamented surface which conveys arguments in literature and the growth of levels of illusion in decoration by Raphael and his followers. In each case patchwork is condemned in favour of the copiousness which comes from successful synthetic style. The artifice which can counterfeit all things and all levels of illusion through mastery of a universal manner is comparable to the rhetorical skill of *De copia* to vary any phrase or theme infinitely through understanding of the sources of argument and style. A visual counterpart might be seen in the encyclopaedic presentation and metamorphosis of antique art in the Vatican Logge. A virtuoso display of variation reappears in Giulio Romano's decorations at Palazzo Tè with their dazzling, protean play of artifice in manner, material and topic. The interplay of materials cultivated in Raphael's workshop is developed in the exploration of the possibilities of each decorative component.

We shall suggest later that Raphael handles the relation between architecture and ornament with great sensitivity, so that the ornament provides an analogy to the ordering and topographic articulation of the architecture. The main point here is to consider how the historicist view of ornament, as articulated in the Leo X letter, relates to the development of surface decoration which covers the whole extent of an object or space.

99 Barkan, *Unearthing*, 134, notes the attention given by Mantegna, Aspertini, Raphael and Van Heemskerck to things that can be detached and recombined.



FIGURE 10.19 *Fig. Giulio Romano and Primatuccio, Sala degli stucchi, Palazzo Tè, Mantua, c. 1529–30.*

PHOTO: MASSIMO PACIFICO, BARNAM REVIEW.

Ornamental Design

The potential which printing offered for serial presentation of motifs is grasped early by Florentine engravers such as Baccio Baldini and Francesco Rosselli, who provide pages of ornaments to be selected and cut as decorative borders for their devotional images.¹⁰⁰ The prefabrication of decorative design apparent in pattern books was carried a stage further in printing, with the assemblage of images from diverse components. This is evident in the engravings made of Rosso's *Galerie* at Fontainebleau (c. 1535–37), which draws together the notion of insert, the interplay of stucco and painting in the Vatican Logge and Michelangelo's ornamental use of the nude in a series of emblematic decorations whose principal subject appears to be the privileges and duties of the king.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ See *Illustrated Bartsch* XXIV.1, 2403.009, 2403.134; XXIV.2, 2404.016–017. Similar anonymous Florentine border panels are reproduced by Hind, *Early Italian Engraving* II, pls. 105, 130; III, pls. 188, 190, 216. Cf. Howard and Snodin, *Ornament: a Social History*, 23, who document the speed and range of the diffusion of printed ornament designs.

¹⁰¹ See Hall, *After Raphael*, 122–26, on the two themes in play—a monarchical theme and a subsidiary mythological theme, at the centre of each wall; Henri Zerner, *L'Art de*

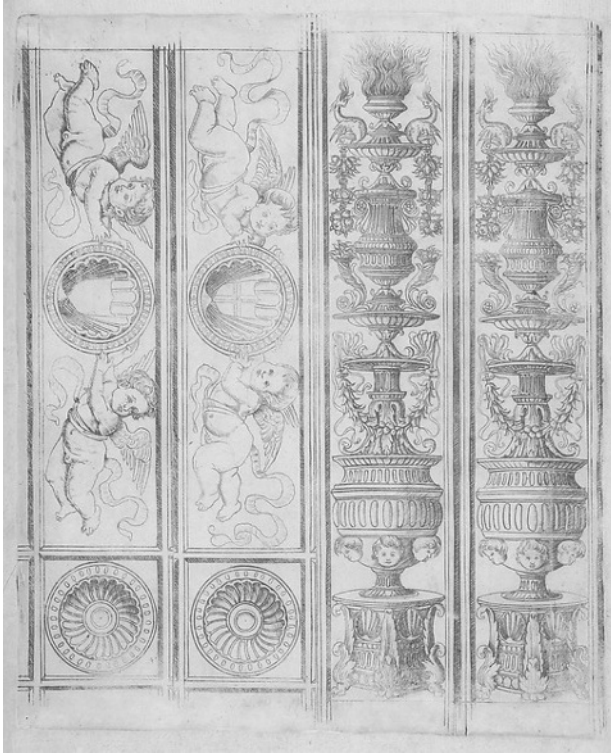


FIGURE 10.20 *Francesco Rosselli, Ornamental borders, from Life of the Virgin and Christ. Florentine, dated 1490–1500. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1929.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

Rosso's decorations had immense success when they were engraved and supplied models for cartouches, which could be employed in various contexts—adapted to another decorative scheme, used as a frontispiece, miniaturised as

la Renaissance en France (Paris: Flammarion, 1996); idem, "Les estampes et le style de l'ornement", in *La Galerie François Ier au Château de Fontainebleau. Revue de l'art* 16–17 (1972), 112–20; André Chastel, "Le programme", *ibid.*, 143–52; Sylvie Béguin, "Le programme mythologique", *ibid.*, 165–72; William McAllister Johnson, "Le programme monarchique", *ibid.*, 153–64; idem, "Les débuts de Primatice à Fontainebleau", *Revue de l'art*, 6 (1969), 8–18; Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of François I: Royal Treasures* (New York: Abrams, 1996); Panofsky and Dora Panofsky, "Iconography of the Galerie François Ier", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser. 6, 52 (1958), 112–90; Eugene Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts*, exh. cat. (Washington DC: National Gallery of Art, 1987). Margarite, the sister of François, spoke of Fontainebleau without the king as a "book in Hebrew" (Zerner, *L'Art*, 84).

an ornament in a printed book, or as a surround for an *impresa*, transformed into designs for a triumphal car, a casket, a fountain or a fireplace.¹⁰² The play between the high relief of the Galerie decorations and flat surface of prints or tapestries derived from them adds a further element to the ornamental invention. (The Galerie furnished inventions for tapestry designs which influenced Italy by 1541–2.)¹⁰³ The cartouche thus shares the flexible quality of the acanthus, but discards the illusion of a vegetal motif in favour of a kind of ornamental *prima materia* which can suggest a range of materials—stucco, wood, leather, cloth, paper, stone or flesh. The regenerative connotations of the plant are replaced by an artificial material which can be transformed by the fantasy of the artist.

In the engravings of Antonio Fantuzzi (c. 1543) we find that the framework of Rosso's and Primaticcio's decorations is often carefully reproduced while the painted history is often replaced by a landscape vignette, underlining the inessential relation of frame and framed image.¹⁰⁴ Jacques Androuet du Cerceau engraved the frames as cartouches with empty spaces at the centre.¹⁰⁵ Such cartouches are often used to frame emblematic figures, where an unremarkable image becomes meaningful through its juxtaposition with the other elements in the symbolic 'mosaic'.

Landscape vignettes could be printed from ready-made stamps which were inserted into spaces or windows in an illustration; Mario Carpo associates this method with Serlio's pre-fabricated assemblages, where the taxonomic presentation of architectural elements illustrates discussion of restitution of antique fragments.¹⁰⁶ Serlio combines model book traditions with the possibilities of

102 Vasari records that Rosso excelled in designs for spectacles and some of his mask designs remain. Here again the *persona* is treated as a surface for the imaginative elaboration of the artist, with results that can appear as disturbing deformations.

103 On the tapestries now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, woven at Fontainebleau c. 1540–50, see Sylvie Pressouyre, "Le témoignage des tapisseries", in *La Galerie François I^{er}*, 106–11.

104 See Bartsch XXXIII, 29 (349)–34 (352). Hall, *After Raphael*, 126, states that Fantuzzi was active at Fontainebleau 1537–50. Fantuzzi also produced separate sets of engravings showing the central histories without the frame.

105 See Zerner, "Les estampes", 112–118.

106 Mario Carpo, *L'architettura dell'età della stampa: oralità, scrittura, libro stampato e riproduzione meccanica dell'immagine nella storia delle teorie architettoniche* (Milan: Jaca Books, 1998) 60; Nesselrath, "I libri di disegno", 137, on the sources in treatises and design books for the illustrations in Serlio, Palladio and Labacco.

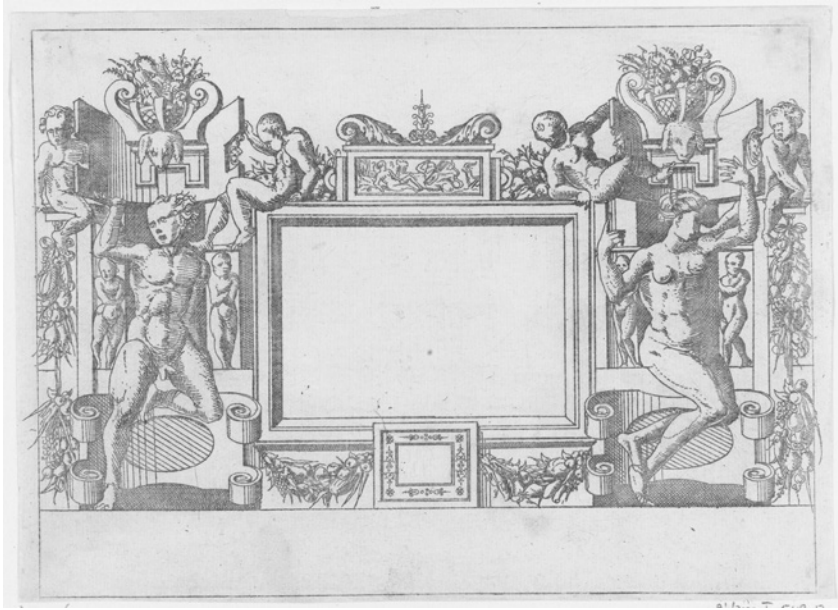


FIGURE 10.21 *Jacques Androuet du Cerceau after Antonio Fantuzzi's engraving in the style of Rosso, 1542/3. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*

PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

the printed book and the schematic ordering he is thought to have learnt from his associate Giulio Camillo.¹⁰⁷

Serlio had the perspicacity to see that the pattern book tradition could be invigorated by Camillo's reduction of an art to a stratification of intellectual operations, each level involving choice from a series of elements. Serlio thus conceives architecture as the selection and coordination of elements at the levels of geometry, perspectival projection, style and typology. This presentation masked the heterogeneity of architecture as a discipline and the difficulties of its definition which perplexed Alberti and Daniele Barbaro.¹⁰⁸ This updating

107 For model book presentation, see Serlio's patterns for floor and ceiling designs in the Fourth Book of the *Regole generali* (1537), the first book of his treatise to be published. On the question of Camillo's association and influence on Serlio, see the discussions of Hart and Hicks, Olivato and Carpo in Chapter 7, n. 212.

108 See Branko Mitrović, *Serene Greed*, 63–68, on Alberti's titling of *De re aedificatoria* to sidestep the problem of whether architecture is an art or science; Barbaro's Vitruvius commentary considers judgement the defining element of architecture.

of model book traditions appeared in figurative art also; Hall comments on the dearth of life studies in mid Cinquecento artists who quote or reuse an elegant figure from their portfolio, as Salviati had a portfolio of finished designs to re-use.¹⁰⁹ Hall calls the artist's mind or his portfolio a "storehouse of images". Here we see the modelbook tradition developing into something like a topics of design—and the use of the figure as an ornamental insert.

The emergence of ornament prints as a category is attested in the stock-list produced by Antonio Lafrery (1573), which includes nine books of ornaments relating to architecture: cornices, capitals and bases, frames, trophies based on Polidoro da Caravaggio, masks, *grotesche*, tempietti and small ruins of Rome, perspectives, friezes and foliage, vases and candlesticks.¹¹⁰ Samuel Quicchelberg's *Inscriptiones vel theatri amplissimi* (1565), a scheme for the encyclopaedic arrangement of collections inspired by Camillo's theatre, grouped ornamental designs (subdivided in foliage, frames, *grotesche*, trophies, fruits and animal designs) with topography, geography, ancient monuments, numismatics, machinery, ships, tools, fittings and furnishings.¹¹¹ This grouping shows ornament grouped with antiquarian studies and subjects which recall the role of *ornatus* as instrument (tools, fittings) or the link between *ornatus mundi* and habitat (geography, topography).

Engravings of *ornati* exhibit the flair, ingenuity or fantasy which an artist could bring to the invention of conventional objects, such as vases or the cartouches in which the framing function of ornament is reinvented.¹¹² In drawings and prints, line and the illusion of relief are the available modes of representation, so that ornament is presented as formal invention, regardless of colour or luminosity; this may have determined the success of acanthus scroll ornament and its metamorphic derivatives or cognates. Thus in the Codex Escorialensis the drawings of mosaic foliage are indistinguishable from those of carvings or painting.

109 Hall, *After Raphael*, 159–62; she discusses use of small wax or clay models to work out postures and lighting. Cf. Ames-Lewis, *Drawing*, 85, on Leonardo's advice to keep a notebook and record the movements of figures which can be re-used later, rather as students and writers were encouraged to gather and note *loci communes* for subsequent use.

110 See Elizabeth Miller, *Sixteenth Century Italian Ornament Prints in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V and A, 1999), 16–17.

111 Ibid., 14.

112 Sets of engraved 'classical' vases appear in Rome, published by Agostino dei Musi, i.e. Veneziano (1530–31), Leonardo da Udine (1542–44), and Enea Vico (1543). Vico also produced engravings of cartouches, trophies, candlesticks and panels of *grotesche*; see *The Illustrated Bartsch xxx*.

To judge from the way that antique style ornament is delineated, it seems that the uniqueness of the antique fragment passes into the uniqueness of the artist's fantasy.¹¹³ This is suggested in Vasari's biographies of Filippino Lippi and Polidoro da Caravaggio, whose studies of antiquity resulted in the creation of bizarre and fantastic images.¹¹⁴ Vasari speaks of the eye dazed ("l'occhio smarisce") and confused by the multiplication and *copia* of beautiful and capricious fantasies which came from the mind of Polidoro and Maturino in the arms and vases of Palazzo Milesi; the antiquities depicted on Palazzo Gaddi were "adorned with all the charm and abundance in everything that a sophisticated talent could imagine".¹¹⁵ The link between studies of antiquity and fantasy are exemplified by the metamorphic acanthus and *grottesche* ornament discussed in the next chapter.

The *grottesche* drawn or engraved from the Vatican Logge or designs by Perino del Vaga, the vases and trophies derived from Polidoro da Caravaggio's façade decorations, the *ornati* of Giulio Romano, Enea Vico, Salviati or Vasari exhibit a self-conscious *disegno* which becomes more flamboyant as the object drawn is more amenable to serial variation, like vases which become showpieces of the reinvention or manipulation of ornamental elements.¹¹⁶ This approach to design was strengthened by the growing importance of the court artist in the Cinquecento, exemplified by the art produced for the later Medici by Vasari and Buontalenti where the artist was required to design a whole range of objects in a distinctive yet grand manner.¹¹⁷

113 See Peruzzi's drawing (Uffizi, inv. 633Ar) of the composite capital with a Pegasus now in Trajan's markets, where the serene elegance of an antique carving is endowed with animation, with the horse seething at the mouth. I am grateful to Peter Fane-Saunders for this point.

114 On Lippi's bizarre ornamental inventions, see Vasari, *Vite* III, 559–60.

115 "ornate con tanta leggiadria e copia d'ogni cosa, che imaginar si possa un sophisticated ingegno", Vasari, *Vite* IV, 464; on the eye dazzled, *ibid.*, 465; on the decorated façades, see *ibid.*, 458–66. Vasari refers to Polidoro as "ingegno pellegrino e veloce".

116 On the Vatican Logge, see Chapter 12. On Giulio Romano as a source for fantastic 'reconstructions' of antique vases, see J. Hayward, "Some spurious antique vase designs of the sixteenth century", *Burlington Magazine*, 114, 831 (June, 1972), 378–86. On the engraving of Polidoro's vases and trophies on Palazzo Milesi (pre 1527) and other lost façades, see Clifford, *Designs*, 56–7; Miller, *Ornament Prints*, 157–73, 233–35, 244–54. Howard and Snodin, *Ornament*, 33–35, reproduce an engraving from Joachim von Sandrart (*Die Teutsche Academie* II, 1679) which shows the Mannerist vases of Enea Vico and Agostino Veneziano as damaged pseudo-antiquities, against a backdrop of the ruins of the Palatine.

117 For Mannerist design as applied to the 'decorative' arts, stage designs and ephemeral *apparati*, see the exhibition catalogues *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del*



FIGURE 10.22 *Pen and ink drawing after Polidoro da Caravaggio and Francesco Maturino, showing trophies from façade of Palazzo Milesi, Rome, early sixteenth century.*
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON.

In this exhibition of the artist's manner of developing and varying forms from representation or function, we might see the ancestor of the Kantian free beauty, emancipated from moral purpose. Spini, who identifies ornament in architecture with architectural ornament, and with the orders, speaks of purely formal delight of arabesques.¹¹⁸ The designs produced by *maestri di disegno*, like Finiguerra or the Pollaiuolo, however exuberant, fitted out objects for some context, even an imaginary one.¹¹⁹ Later ornamental sketches and prints are presented more as displays of design, showing the grace, fantasy and virtuosity

Cinquecento: Palazzo Vecchio: committenza e collezionismo medicei (Florence: Electa-Edizioni Medicee, 1980); *Il Poter e lo spazio: La scena del principe* (Florence: Electa-Edizioni Medicee, 1980); *Il Primato del disegno* (Florence: Electa-Edizioni Medicee, 1980).

118 Spini, *Libri*, 72.

119 *Maestri di disegno* like Pollaiuolo and Maso Finiguerra took considerable interest in invention of *all'antica* ornament and pioneered in printmaking. On Finiguerra, see Lorenza Melli, *Maso Finiguerra: I disegni* (Florence: Edifir, 1995).

of the artist.¹²⁰ In the ornamental designs of and after artists such as Polidoro da Caravaggio and Giulio Romano, the accidental elaboration of ornament appears to grow from the process of design.¹²¹ Later Renaissance Florentine court designers such as Salviati or Buontalenti show ornamental design as a bravura contest with the requirements posed by the object's nominal function; in Buontalenti this contest is carried throughout his works, from ephemera to architectural monuments.¹²² Decorative elaboration thus proclaims formal analogies over function; a similar design be varied to show a triumphal car in a *mascherata*, a festival barge, a tomb, a cradle, a casement or a sauce boat.

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Wohl distinguishes between “pictorial *ornato*” and two kinds of “rhetorical *ornato*”.¹²³ The second kind of rhetorical *ornato* he associates with Pontormo, Bronzino and Parmigianino—artists whom he regards as not concerned with classical antiquity but “an *ornato* style of artifice proceeding from the principle of *disegno interno* and emphasizing the beauty and eloquence of shape, line and colour”.¹²⁴ Here we see ornament conflated with style and Zuccari's design terminology invoked. This is distinguished from Wohl's first kind of rhetorical *ornato*, exemplified by Gentile da Fabriano, Pisanello, Botticelli and Filippino Lippi, in whose refinement, ornamentation and detail he see analogies with “the *ornatus* of classical rhetoric”.¹²⁵ This kind of *ornato* becomes what Wohl calls the “classical ornate style”—the style exemplified by Pinturicchio and linked to the exploration of the Domus Aurea, which passes into the Roman

120 See Howard and Snodin, *Ornament*, 35, on Polidoro's repeatedly engraved vases designs: “Their most important effect . . . was to licence the distortions, rearrangements and additions to the classical language which characterised the increasingly bizarre baroque and rococo vases conceived in the hundred years after about 1600”.

121 On Giulio's drawings, antique collections and studies of antiquity in relation to his work as scenographer, see Burns, “Quelle cose antique”.

122 On Buontalenti, see Amelio Fara, *Buontalenti: l'architettura, la guerra e l'elemento geometrico* (Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1988); idem, *Bernardo Buontalenti* (Milan: Electa, 1995).

123 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 245–47. Wohl associates “pictorial *ornato*” with Giotto, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, Giovanni Bellini and the painters of Florentine and Roman High Renaissance. He describes it as “breadth and clarity in the rendering and distribution of forms, the suppression or moderation of decorative embellishment, and the organisation of the picture as a ‘fully ornamented plane’”. While this suggests the organisation of paintings as decorations which show aesthetic totality it does not account for the role of ornament which his terminology suggests.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.



FIGURE 10.23 *Giulio Romano (d. 1546), design for a drinking cup, n. d. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Purchase, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1971.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

grand manner of the Sala di Costantino, Polidoro da Caravaggio and Salviati, and into the European language of ornate Renaissance language of art.¹²⁶ Whether one agrees with Wohl's terminology, he does describe the way that antiquarian ornament develops into ornamental style, whether in the grand manner of illusionist decoration or the stylistic artifice of *maniera*. In each

126 Wohl thus includes *grotesche* in his account of "ornate classical style".



FIGURE 10.24 *Francesco Salviati, knife designs, engraved by Cherubino Alberti, 1583.*

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FIGURE 10.25 Circle of Perino del Vaga, design for a Festival Barge, c. 1530–40. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Rogers Fund, 1971.

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

case, ornament becomes linked with *disegno*—whether in the invention of complex decorative schemes or in the elaboration of form.

In artists who develop ornament and grace as figural properties to a conspicuous degree, such as Michelangelo or Parmigianino, human figures designed with exaggerated artifice are deployed where we might expect to find decorative motifs, and ornamental invention becomes overtly fantastic.¹²⁷ Parmigianino's designs for his decorations in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, show figures abstracted into serpentine lines and animated by a distinct, artificial actuality, and hint at a daimonic vitality that animates the artist's imagination.¹²⁸ *Maniera* here is an exaggerated gracefulness which

127 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 246, notes the important contribution made to the concept of the figure itself as *ornato*; see Freedberg, *Parmigianino* 1950, 3–17; idem, “Observations on the Painting of the Maniera”.

128 See A. Popham, *Catalogue of the Drawings of Parmigianino* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), I, 22–25; III, pls 312–44.

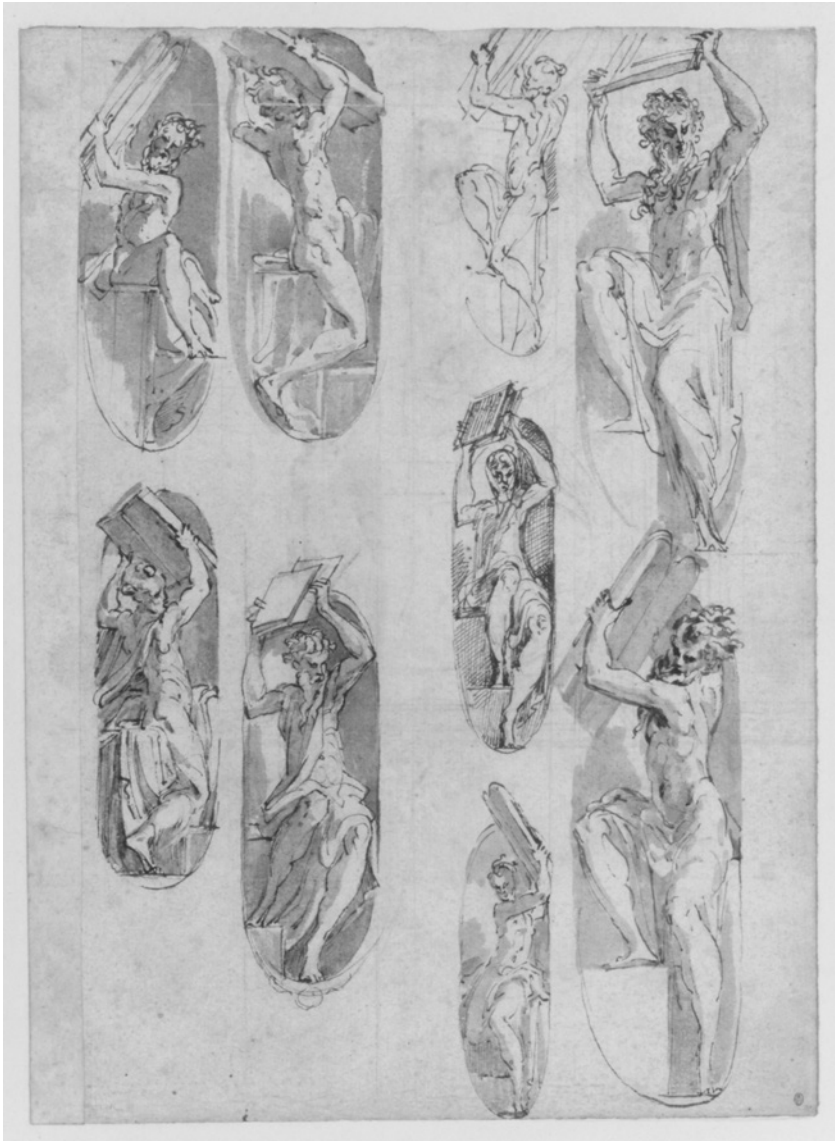


FIGURE 10.26 *Parmigianino, studies for decoration of the transept arch, Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, c. 1531–40. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Pfeiffer Fund, 1962.*

PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

takes the enlivening character of art beyond the conventions of naturalism; the figural is transformative.¹²⁹

In the treatise literature, the increasing importance of *disegno*, so that the artist's manner communicates itself to all levels of invention, absorbs ornamental design into larger conceptions of style.¹³⁰ Danti posits a genre of non-representational invention, or "chimere"—including *grottesche*, "fogliami" and architectural ornament which do not represent things in nature, but combine something new from compositions of various natural things and have their greatest use and beauty and ornament in architecture.¹³¹

Danti's postulation of a genre of fantastic, ornamental design is echoed in other treatises, notably Giovanni Andrea Gilio's *Dialogo degli errori dei pittori circa l'istorie* (1564). Gilio divides painting into the historical (including religious painting) and the poetic; the poetic painter works on the basis of Horatian *ut pictura poesis*, showing things which are not (*finto*) and cannot be (*favoloso*), including allegories, metamorphoses and mythological figures.¹³² Gilio approves of ornamental *finzioni* which do not flout verisimilitude, like a pergola on a vault; his distinction can be seen as an attempt to regulate poetic license which also however supposes the notion of a sphere of fantastic design.¹³³

This sphere appears also in Zuccari's *Idea*, which creates an extended 'fantastic' category as the third species of *disegno esterno artificiale* which pertains to forms of decoration, architecture and technological devices.¹³⁴ Once artistic invention is considered in terms of *disegno*, ornament becomes a mode of figural expression or an area of fantastic invention. Bober contrasts Raphael's ability to achieve a "compelling recreation" of the classical spirit without a specific model with Mannerist nostalgic or archaistic use of antiquities not as a means to recover life or movement but as a "calligraphic abstraction" which "stresses the artist's arbitrary invention".¹³⁵

129 The legend of Parmigianino's fascination with alchemy, recounted by Vasari, is suggestive because it echoes the artificial, stylised transformation into hyper-real, unnatural life.

130 Spini, *Libri*, 72, sees invention as the ability to design ornament not used by others, which flows from the designer's talent. Spini however cautions against capricious or licentious invention. On Spini, see Payne, "Reclining Bodies", 102–3; Eck, *Classical Rhetoric*, 48–49.

131 Danti, *Trattato*, 235–36.

132 Gilio, *Dialogo degli errori dei pittori circa l'istorie* (1564), repr. TA II, 1–115, at 15, 17, 21–22, 89, 100.

133 Ibid., 21.

134 Zuccari, *L'idea* II.4.

135 Bober, *Amico Aspertini*, 23–25.

Thus ornamental invention becomes an exhibition of the graphic manner in which an artist displays his understanding of design.¹³⁶ The classicism outlined in the Leo x letter provides a foundation for this understanding, to which the theories of *disegno* added predominantly Aristotelian philosophical elements; printing provided a vehicle for its diffusion. The identification of ornament with fantasy apparent in Danti, Gilio and Zuccari thus reflects a concept of *disegno* founded in Aristotelian accounts of the process of apprehension, in which fantasy plays a crucial role. The identification of ornament with fantastic design, and the link of this identification with *all'antica* style is however most evident in grotesquework, to which we now turn.

136 The other aspect of this question—which lies beyond this study—concerns the organisation of the workshop with large teams of assistants working under the direction of a master who designs everything. Such organisation lent itself particularly to court artists, given the wide range of designs they were required to produce and the pressures of expeditious execution. Raphael is often seen as the pioneer of such kind of workshop, followed by Giulio Romano, Perino del Vaga and Vasari. For comment, see Hall, *After Raphael*, 104–6.

The *Grottesche* Part 1. Fragment to Field

We touched on the *grottesche* as a mode of aggregating decorative fragments into structures which could display the artist's mastery of design and imaginative invention.¹ The *grottesche* show the far-reaching transformation which had occurred in the conception and handling of ornament, with the exaltation of antiquity and the growth of ideas of artistic style, fed by a confluence of rhetorical and Aristotelian thought.² They exhibit a decorative style which spreads through painted façades, church and palace decoration, frames, furnishings, intermediary spaces and areas of 'licence' such as gardens.³ Such proliferation shows the flexibility of candelabra, peopled acanthus or arabesque ornament, which can be readily adapted to various shapes and registers; the *grottesche* also illustrate the kind of ornament which flourished under printing. With their lack of narrative, end or occasion, they can be used throughout a context, and so achieve a unifying decorative mode. In this ease of application lies a reason for their prolific success as the characteristic form of Renaissance ornament, and their centrality to later historicist readings of ornament as period style. This appears in their success in Neo-Renaissance style and nineteenth century

- 1 The extant drawings of antique ornament by Giuliano da Sangallo, Amico Aspertini, Jacopo Ripanda, Bambaia and the artists of the Codex Escurialensis are contemporary with—or reflect—the exploration of the Domus Aurea. On the influence of the Domus Aurea in the formation of the *grottesche*, see Nicole Dacos, *La Découverte de la Domus Aurea et la Formation des grotesques à la Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, Leiden: Brill, 1969); idem, "Ghirlandaio et l'antique", *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 39 (1962), 419–55; idem, *Le Logge di Raffaello: Maestro e bottega di fronte all'antica* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1977, 2nd ed. 1986); idem, *Le Logge di Raffaello: L'antico, la bibbia, la bottega, la fortuna* (Milan: Jaca Books and Vatican City: Musei Vaticani, 2008); idem, "Il trastullo di Raffaello", *Paragone* 19, 219 (May 1962), 3–29; Dacos and Furlan, *Giovanni da Udine*.
- 2 For surveys of the grotesques, see Philippe Morel *Les Grotesques: Les figures de l'imaginaire dans la peinture italienne de la fin de la Renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997); idem, "Il funzionamento simbolico e la critica delle grottesche nella seconda metà del Cinquecento", in *Roma e l'antico nell'arte e nella cultura del Cinquecento*, ed. Marco Fagiolo (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1985), 149–78; Cristina Acidini Luchinat "La grottesca", *Storia dell'arte italiana* XI, Part 3, IV (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), 161–200. The principal Cinquecento discussions of *grottesche* by Ligorio, Lomazzo, Armenini and Paleotti are excerpted in SAC III, Part 15.
- 3 The use of black and white *sgraffito* grotesques on façades appears with Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini.



FIGURE 11.1 *Bernardo Buontalenti and Bernardino Poccetti, Palazzo di Bianca Capello, Florence, 1570–74.*

PHOTO: SAILKO, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA 3-0, DESATURATED FROM ORIGINAL.

pattern books, where they appear as the distinctive style of Italian Renaissance ornament.⁴ The *grotesche* as universally applicable *all'antica* decorative style thus typified the nineteenth century understanding of the Renaissance as the beginning of historicist style.⁵ The result of such proliferation would ultimately be to strengthen the distinction between fine and “decorative” or “minor” arts, with the latter conceived globally as pleasurable décor.

The *grotesche* show the limitations in approaching ornament as a genealogy of motifs, rather than as the handling of relations.⁶ The flourishing of so-called grotesque decoration, from antiquity on, occurs in periods when scenographic design and the historicist revival of earlier art are dominant in decorative

4 See Owen Jones's *Grammar of Ornament*; nineteenth century revival of the *grotesche* exploits their flexibility in varied mediums, such as polychrome ceramics, decorative brick-work, stained glass and carved wood.

5 Cf. Ruskin's oppositions between the “organic” nature of Gothic decoration versus the false, historic artifice of classicism.

6 See Focillon, *Life of Forms*, 67–68.

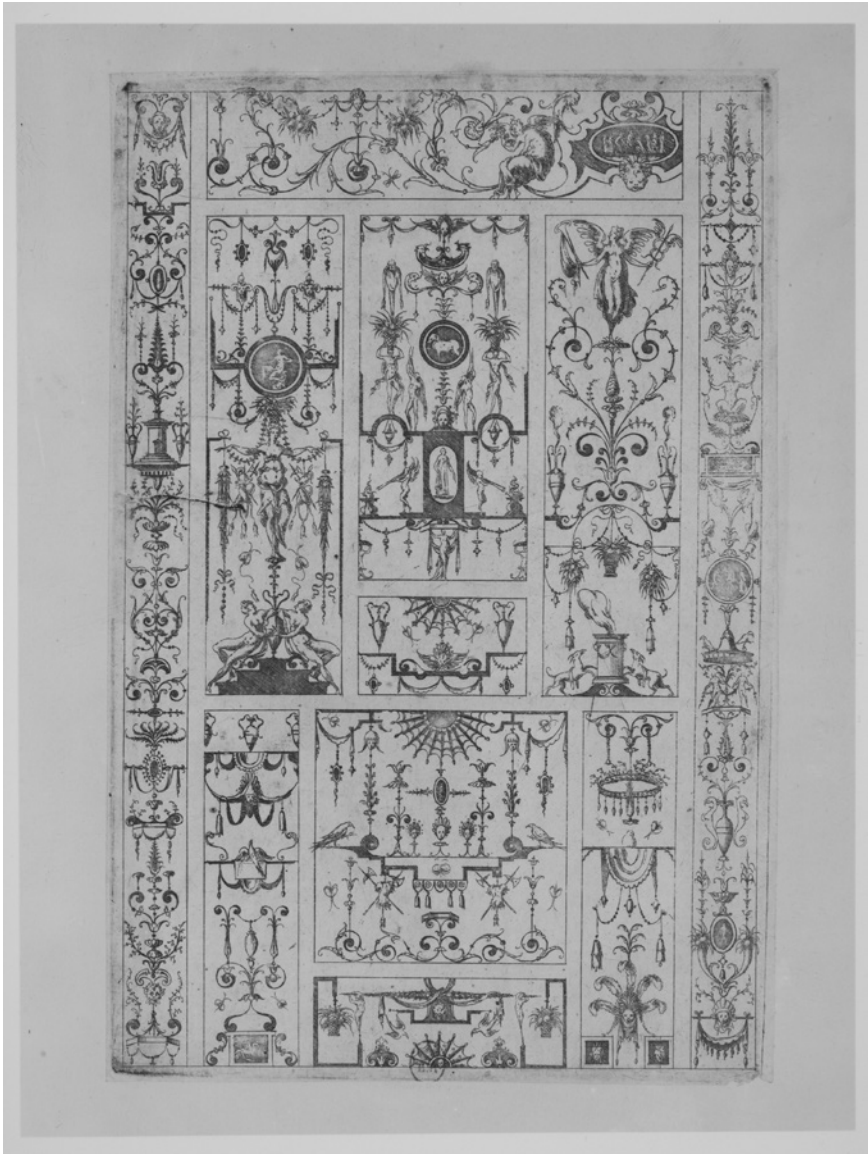


FIGURE 11.2 *Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, Le livre des grotesques (Grandes Grotesques), 1556, New York, Metropolitan Museum, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1923. PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.*

painting. We see this in late Second and early Third Style Roman painting, with its use of scenographic motifs and accommodation of various forms and periods of art, such as illusionistic statues, caryatids, narrative scenes, Egyptian



FIGURE 11.3 Owen Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, 1856, pl. 86*, *Italian Ornament*.
 PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
 DIGITAL COLLECTIONS CENTER,
[HTTP://DIGITAL.LIBRARY.WISC.
 EDU/1711.DL/DLDECARTS](http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.DL/DLDECARTS).
 GRAMORNJONES.

artefacts and *pinakes* showing archaic Greek paintings (see Chapter 2, fig. 1).⁷ Vitruvius' condemnation of the fantastic character of grotesque ornament ("things which are not and cannot be") is followed in *De architectura* VII.5 by a critique of excessively sophisticated stage painting.⁸

7 See Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, 155–56; Alessandra Zamperini, *Le Grottesche. Il sogno della pittura nella decorazione parietale* (San Giovanni Lupatoto, Verona: Edizioni Arsenale, 2007), 17–29; Clarke, *Houses of Roman Italy*, 64, on the cultural status of such decoration.

8 See Summers, *Michelangelo*, 142–43. Vitruvius' condemnation of grotesque ornament for its flouting of verisimilitude is echoed in Vasari's condemnation of Gothic ornament ("lavori . . . tedeschi"), similarly criticised for falsity in proportion and materials, *Vite* 1, 67.

The *grottesche* in short appear alongside another form of sophistic mimesis, namely scenographic illusion. This appears in Renaissance, as well as Roman, use of *grottesche*. As Sandström argues, the illusionism cultivated from Pinturicchio onwards creates tension between false architecture and pictorial space, or undermines the illusion so as to heighten the viewer's awareness of the artifice of the decoration.⁹ He writes:

This denial, the lack of consistency between space and false architecture, has become an artistic device as important as illusion . . . Invitation and transition work together to give prominence to illusionism, not to the illusion.¹⁰

The combination of illusionist arcades opening onto vistas and *grottesche* appears in Pinturicchio's decoration in the Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere (c. 1490), in the Sala del Gran Maestro and Sala dei Mesi; the latter was imitated by Falconetto in the Sala dello Zodiaco, Palazzo dell'Arco, Mantua.¹¹ Falconetto also juxtaposes perspectives and *grottesche* in the Odeo Cornaro, Padua, where outsize *grottesche* decorate the great vault of the small octagonal vestibule, whose lower walls are painted as an illusionistic loggia or belvedere, framing *vedute*. The imposing colonnade of the Sala del Gran Maestro develops the monumental perspectival decoration of the Greek Library in the Vatican and has a successor in Peruzzi's Sala delle Prospettive in the Farnesina;

9 See Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, 81–82; he regards the image of the Lateran Baptistry in the Sala di Costantino, which is contained within the meta-illusion of a painted tapestry, and the Sala dei Cento Giorni, where the framing architecture and the architecture of the *istoria* are spatially incompatible, as the culmination of this style of illusion.

10 Idem., 82.

11 On Pinturicchio's revival of illusionist decoration, see idem., 41–47; J. Schulz, "Pinturicchio and the revival of antiquity", *JWCI* 25 (1962), 35–55, quoting Pliny's accounts of illusionist landscapes, *NH*, XXXV.37.116–17; Vitruvius, *Architectura*, VII.5.2; Anna Cavallaro, "Pinturicchio nel palazzo di Domenico della Rovere. La sala dei Mesi", in *Roma nella svolta*, 269–80; Anna Cavallaro and Maria Giulia Aurigemma, *Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo. Architettura e decorazione* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999), 175–194. On Falconetto's Sala dei Mesi, see Cavallaro, "Pinturicchio nel palazzo di Domenico della Rovere. La sala dei Mesi"; Gunter Schweikhart, "Un artista veronese di fronte all'antico: gli affreschi zodiacali del Falconetto a Mantova", in *Roma e l'antico nell'arte e nella cultura del Cinquecento*, 461–488; Julian Kliemann and Michael Rohlmann, *Italian Frescoes: High Renaissance and Mannerism*, trans. Steven Lindberg (New York: Abbeville, 2004), 16–17, 30.



FIGURE 11.4 *Falconetto, Sala dello Zodiaco, Palazzo dell'Arco, Mantua, c. 1520.*

COURTESY FONDAZIONE DELL'ARCO.

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Pinturicchio painted another illusionist loggia in the Loggia del Belvedere.¹² *Grottesche* appear alongside perspectival scenes in the intarsia executed by so-called “maestri di prospettiva”, as in the doors of the Palazzo Ducale, Urbino or in Perugino’s decorations in the Perugia Cambio.¹³ The *grottesche* do more than stress the presence of the frame as a condition for perspectival representation; they signal illusion and fantasy as the mode of interaction with artworks.

Philippe Morel has argued that the *grottesche* flourish so greatly in the Renaissance because they respond to particular representational needs of the period.¹⁴ The *grottesche* lose their exploratory force around the turn of

12 See *Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere*, 186; Pietro Scarpellini and M. Silvestrini, *Pinturicchio* (Milan: F. Motta, 2003), 105, fig. 6, 137, fig. 3, 138–41; Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, 97–98; Simona Olivetti “La *Historia Naturales* (xxxv, 116–117) di Plinio il Vecchio, fonte per la decorazione della loggia del Belvedere di Innocenzo VIII”, *Storia dell’arte* 59 (1987), 5–10. For contemporary Roman painted colonnades, see the Sala dei Notabili, Palazzo Altamps, and the Sala del Mappamondo in Palazzo Venezia.

13 The Urbino panels of grotesque ornament in intarsia carry *imprese*. Emblematic-grotesque intarsia has an enigmatic manifestation in Lorenzo Lotto’s covers for the choir stalls of Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo.

14 Morel, *Grotesques*, 22, 73.

the seventeenth century and subsequent forms of arabesque ornament, such as *rocaille* decoration, continue to play a role of formal mediation but are subsumed to the overall conception of the space as decor.¹⁵ The grotesques disappear from the synthetic grand style practised by Annibale Carracci, Pietro da Cortona and Domenichino, where ornament is absorbed into stylistic quality appropriate to the decorum of the image.¹⁶ The degree to which grotesque ornament subsequently subsides into historicist décor is illustrated by its reappearance in eighteenth century Pompeian style decoration, where it appears as historical reconstructions without the imaginative freedom of Renaissance *grotesche*.¹⁷

Seventeenth and eighteenth century critics such as Baldinucci, Milizia and Malvasia who described and endorsed the achievement of the early seventeenth century classical painters likewise exhibit a poor opinion of the *grotesche*.¹⁸ Beyond the artistic preoccupations of these writers, we should recall the low standing of Aristotelian philosophy in this period and we might see their disdain as shaped by the loss of a tradition of aesthetic reflection shaped by Aristotelian metaphysics and psychology.¹⁹ Thus Milizia's condemnation of the Vatican Logge in *Dell'arte di vedere nelle belle arti del disegno* (Venice, 1781) criticises Raphael for promoting the *grotesche* against Vitruvius and the *senso commune*, i.e. *sensus communis*.²⁰ Milizia's remark reflects the movement away from the older understanding of the *sensus communis* as the

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- 15 See for example the vaults of the Vatican library (1587–90), decorated by Central Italian artists and Annibale Durante's ornamentation in the Salone dei Corazzieri, Quirinal Palace, 1616.
 - 16 Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (Bologna: Domenico Barbieri, 1678), I, 340 recalled the mockery of the Carracci at Cesare Baglione as a "Pittor bottaio" (cooper) for his ornamentation.
 - 17 See Acidini Luchinat, "Grottesca", 197; Focillon, *Life of Forms*, 68, sees academic sterility already in Renaissance *grotesche*.
 - 18 Baldinucci in *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno*, Florence, 1681, refers to *grotesche* merely as an adjective, "aggrottescato", meaning distant from nature. Malvasia is said to have called Raphael "boccaloro" for disseminating the taste for grotesque decoration. See Acidini Luchinat, "Grottesca", 192–93.
 - 19 Tommaso Temenza's description of Scamozzi's *Idea dell'architettura universale* as "much gold hidden in the dung of the Peripatetics" in his *Vita di Vicenzio Scamozzi Vicentino* (Venice, 1770, facs. repr. Milan: Edizioni Labor, 1966), 472, illustrates the anti-Aristotelianism of the period.
 - 20 "Raffaello (anche Raffaello dormì) ne insalsicciò le Logge Vaticane, ora tanto promosse a dispetto di Vitruvio e del senso commune", Francesco Milizia, *Dell'arte di vedere nelle belle arti del disegno* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1781), 122, quoted in Acidini Luchinat, "Grottesca", 192. Milizia's 'insalsicciò'—to stuff like a sausage—with its implication of indiscriminate, overfilled content suggests the associations exploited by the Cinquecento burlesque writers who proclaimed the affinity of their works to *grotesche*. The Logge

first of the internal senses—the senses which generate grotesques—to ‘common sense’ in the more modern understanding, signifying something in accordance with the likelihood of empirically observed reality.

Forms Made by Chance

The *grottesche* contribute to reflection on the association of ornament with accidental variation. In the Aristotelian psychology which underpins the grotesques’ display of fantastic transformation via plant growth (i.e. the activity of the vegetative soul), the transformative activity of the fantasy has its end in the process which produces intelligible forms. The *grottesche* allude to the pivotal role of the fantasy in providing the images which thought uses for thinking (Aristotle, *De anima* 431a14–17), while exhibiting a deferral of the judgement that prepares phantasms to become intelligible forms known to the intellect. In Avicenna, the combinatory activity which proceeded by compounding, dividing and comparing is the *vis imaginativa* or *vis cogitans* which works on images taken from the *imaginatio* or the memory.²¹ Cogitation was seen as discursive and it entailed judgement, although this judgement is particular; cogitation can make us conscious of the existence of universals instantiated in particulars, although it cannot know universal natures, which can be known to the intellect alone.

The combinatory activity of the fantasy was discussed by Renaissance commentators, such as Gianfrancesco Pico in *De imaginatione* (1501).²² Gianfrancesco Pico stresses the analogies with painting and painters and the imagination’s combinatory role; he associates it with affect, citing Avicenna.²³ Most striking is the way that imagination eclipses the other inner senses in his account, encroaching on the functions of the cogitative faculty, such as ministering images to discursive reason and the contemplative intellect; Pico calls imagination “the whole inner force of the sensitive soul” and the mean which

refers to the second storey of Bramante’s Logge, decorated by Raphael; the other stories will be termed the “first Logge” or the “third Logge”.

- 21 For Avicenna in *De anima*, the *phantasia* is identified with the *sensus communis* while the *imaginatio* is a store-house of sense images. On cogitation and its role in artistic judgement, see Summers, *Judgment*, 198–234. On the association of imagination and cogitation in Renaissance art treatises, especially Francesco di Giorgio, see Martin Kemp, “From ‘mimesis’ to ‘fantasia’”, *Viator* 8 (1977), 347–98.
- 22 Gianfrancesco Pico, *On the imagination*, trans. Harry Caplan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930). Pico uses *imaginatio* and *phantasia* as interchangeable terms and rejects Avicenna’s separation of the two.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 27, 85.

joins body and soul.²⁴ If the imagination is illuminated by the higher intellectual faculties and by scripture, man is elevated; without sacred revelation, the imagination becomes a source of errors and can cause degeneration into the bestiality of sensual life.²⁵ The themes of potential for ontological ascent or degeneration, and the unique human freedom in selecting and imitating qualities from the whole order of being is familiar from the so-called “Freedom of Man” oration of Gianfrancesco’s uncle Giovanni Pico.

Gianfrancesco loads on the imagination capacities which his uncle had identified with the unique conditions of human being. While he concentrates on the negative, degrading potential of imagination, he notes that the element not shared with beasts of the uniquely human *duplex imaginatio* pertains “ad ornatum, ad ambitionem, ad honores”.²⁶ Pico’s treatise, where imagination absorbs the activities and functions of the common sense, illustrates the psychology underpinning theories of art in the period when the *grotesche* became such a central decorative mode.

The *grotesche* taunt the viewer with the possibility that universals may not be known from the exhaustive collection of particulars; what is universal is rather the appetitive character of fantasy, which produces movement (*De anima* 433a), illustrated in the grotesques’ endlessly repeated phytomorph growths. They do violence to the Aristotelian hierarchy of souls and their activities by showing movement, the animal activity caused by appetite and fantasy, as vegetative growth. The *grotesche* thus raise the related question of the relation between informing, and transforming activity.

This leads to the allusions, textual and pictorial, to seeing forms in random shapes, such as clouds or stains, as in Mantegna’s *Saint Sebastian*. The theme appears in Aristotle’s *De insomnis* 460b, on delirious visions where the residual movements of sense possess verisimilitude so that marks on walls appear like animals; the lover’s obsessive imagining of the beloved is a similar kind of dream-image.²⁷ This theme of the lover’s disordered fantasy appears in Petrarch’s projection of Laura’s image in rock, wood, or water

24 Ibid., 39–41. Pico refuses to discuss whether there are multiple inner senses (as argued by the Latin interpreters of Aristotle and Aquinas) or a single power of the sensitive soul with diverse functions—a view he ascribes to Themistius and Alexander of Aphrodisias whose views, as Caplan notes, Pico simplifies and exaggerates (ibid., 34, n. 2).

25 Ibid., 43–49.

26 Pico, *De imag.*, 89.

27 See Bundy, *Theory*, 77. Aristotle also mentions forms in the clouds in *Meteorologia*, 1.2.

(*Canzoniere* 129; *Epystole metriche* 1.6) and in Lorenzo de' Medici's *Comento*.²⁸ Bundy contrasts the unique image of the beloved fantasised by the lover in *De somnis* 460b with the contemplation of the eternal idea of beauty; the metamorphic phantasms concern particulars.²⁹

The theme of the chance form, or the imaginary form 'hidden' in nature enters art treatises as early as Cennino Cennini's *Libro dell'arte* where the artist's *fantasia* is said to "discover things not seen, hiding themselves under the shadow of natural objects . . . presenting to plain sight what does not actually exist".³⁰ Cennini continues with an allusion to the licence to compose imaginary figures "half man, half horse"—i.e. the centaur, a recurrent image for the shapes seen in things by the fantasy.³¹ For Cennini, in Horatian tradition, this fantastic activity shows the license shared by poetry and art. Alberti comments in *De pictura* 11.28 on nature delighting in 'painting' hippocentaurs and bearded kings' faces in marble and his account of the origin of sculpture when a tree trunk or clod suggested a form to be completed in *De statua*.³² Leonardo famously exhorted artists to train their *ingegno* by discovering figures and scenes in stains, clouds, ashes or mud.³³ Vasari uses the theme in his *Life* of

28 *Comento*, commentary on Sonnet 17.

29 Bundy, *Theory*, 77.

30 Cennino Cennini, *Libro dell'arte* trans. Daniel Thompson as *The Craftsman's Handbook* (New York, Dover, 1960), 1; see Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 177.

31 The theme of imaginary creatures is linked to sophistic arguments about demonstrating being, specifically to Gorgias: Sextus Empiricus *Against the Mathematicians* VII 80, in discussion of Gorgias' *On nature* refers to Scylla and Charybdis, a topos for fantasies which reappears in Medieval accounts of poetic imagination (see Summers, *Michelangelo*, 48–50, quoting Isidore). Untersteiner, *Sofisti*, 198, discusses Gorgias' allusion to chimeras and Scylla as evidence that we can think of things which do not exist.

32 See Summers, *Michelangelo* 122–5, quoting Alberti, *De statua* in *On Painting and on Sculpture* ed. and trans. C. Grayson (London: Phaidon, 1972), 121; cf. Alberti, *Opuscoli morali*, trans. Cosimo Bartoli (Venice: Francesco Franceschi, 1568), 290. Alberti in *Della pittura* speaks of images "nelle fessure de marmi", contracted to *marmoribus* in *De pictura* 11.28; see *Opere volgari*, ed. Grayson (Bari: Laterza, 1960–73), III, 50–51; *Della pittura*, ed. Luigi Mallè (Florence: Sansoni, 1950), 80. Janson, "Image", 254–5, notes that Alberti gives Narcissus as the inventor of painting as the art of seizing images in reflective surfaces, but returns near the end of *De pictura* to chance images in stone, using examples from Pliny—who also supplies the account of paintings created by chance markings of a sponge. Janson sees Pliny's relation of images in stone as concerned with prodigies of nature rather than reflection on artistic invention.

33 Leonardo, *Treatise on Painting* 1, ed. A.P. McMahon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 50, 59, 109.

Piero di Cosimo, perhaps as a way of stressing the oddity of that artist.³⁴ In the earliest of the Cinquecento art treatises, Paolo Pino speaks of nature painting forms in tree trunks and smoke, saying that nature delights in this as we delight in looking in a mirror.³⁵ This recalls the end of Plato's *Sophist*, with its parallel between images like shadows or reflections in nature and the imitations created by (sophistic) art.

The relation between such imaginative projection of figures into random shapes and painting is discussed by Philostratus in *Apollonius of Tyana* 11.22 where everyone is said to be capable of such imaginative activity but artists alone have the skill and design to produce likenesses as artefacts.³⁶ Leonardo's cultivation of 'disordered' fantasies as an exercise has a propaedeutic character—a means to attain improved perception and invention, not an end in itself.³⁷ Alberti's comment on the suggestive shapes of a trunk or clod is closer to Varchi's Aristotelian discussion of the artist who actualizes a sculpture as he draws forth from its matter a form which lies in it in potential.³⁸

In the actualisation of a form in the potency of matter, the artificial form is often conceived as an idealisation and the matter is assumed to be stable, if imperfect. The artist conceives a perfected form and works with matter to realise it. Shapes glimpsed in clouds, flames or stains are perceived as likenesses due to chance accidents of resemblance and their material is evanescent; one resemblance will appear after another, with the change in the formation or the perception of a new point of similarity.³⁹ Such random likenesses cannot reveal anything essential about the relation between the shape and object of

34 Vasari, *Vite* IV, 62. On Piero's marine monsters and imaginary beasts see *ibid.*, 66. Janson, "Image", 261, sees chance-image features in Piero's *The Discovery of Honey* and *The Misfortunes of Silenus*.

35 Pini, *Dialogo di pittura*, 113.

36 See Janson, "Image", 257–8.

37 Leonardo speaks of stains made by sponges as giving invention, but not detail; see *Treatise* I, 59. He notes that Botticelli, who disliked landscape painting and underrated its difficulty, claimed that a landscape could be seen in any stain made by a thrown sponge. Hanson, "Image", 262, contrasts the imaginative activity of the viewer who reads forms into a shape with the more mimetic function of forms made by thrown sponges in Pliny, where the stain 'represented' the foam in the mouth of a panting animal.

38 Alberti suggests that as the art developed, sculptors learnt how to remove excess material to reveal the figure potentially present, *De statua*, 121.

39 The fleeting, insubstantial character of chance images is caricatured in the exchange between Hamlet and Polonius (*Hamlet* 111.2.393–400) where Hamlet claims to see a series of shapes in the clouds, products of his 'disordered' fancy. Polonius' prompt endorsement

resemblance; nor can they be said to inform matter. The art of discovering likenesses in accidentals becomes ultimately the art of caricature, which takes us away from ideals of actualisation and of ornament; it frequently involves degrading a subject which is likened to a lower animal or inanimate object. Resemblance-making based on discovery of chance accidentals does not sustain a parallel between the working of art and nature of the kind that ennobles the artificer's making as the actualisation of form. Thus Cicero, author of the claim for the teleological activity of the artist from an innate idea, mocks the reverence for chance resemblances created by sponges, animals or revealed within stones.⁴⁰

Artistry based on forms made by chance emphasises the ingenious, the individual, the illusory and the notion of fantasy as an appetite which moves a particular end, rather than a faculty assisting the formation of universals. A nice illustration is Correggio's *Jupiter and Io* (c. 1530/1, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), where the god at once embodies and disguises himself in the cloud.⁴¹ The painting is a virtuoso performance of illusionism in modelling through tone and light and in depicting fleeting atmospheric effects—the sophistic, non-teleological skills of the artificer. Correggio's Jupiter is a figure in metamorphosis; the god loved by Io is a *phantasia* and may be a deceiving phantasm.⁴² The thematic centrality of fantasy in the painting is also suggested by its character of erotic reverie and the role of air as a medium of fantasy, a carrier of spirits which produce affects from external sources *and* through the agency of the internal senses.⁴³ Correggio's painting comments on the artist or mythoplast as a producer of imaginary, illusory images, prized as objects

of each shape 'discovered' mocks the insincerity of the courtier and turns the theme of the illusion into a parable on opportunism.

40 *De divinatione* 1.13, see Janson, "Image", 256.

41 On dating, see Cecil Gould, *The Paintings of Correggio* (London: Faber, 1976), 130–31, 275–76.

42 For criticism of Homeric narratives which show god-sent phantoms or apparitions (*phantasias*) to deceive mortals, see Plato, *Republic* 11, 383e 10–13.

43 The eleventh century *Peri energeias daimonōn* (*De operatione daemonum*) of Michael Psellus, translated before 1488 by Ficino, likens the changing shapes of clouds to the bodies of demons. On air as a medium for the *species* which things give off, which exist as phantasms in the mind, see Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia* I.6, where the theme of illusion is discussed. See Michael Cole, "The demonic arts and the origin of the medium", *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002), 621–640. Shakespeare discusses air and imagination in *Romeo and Juliet* 1.4, 96–99; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* v.1, 4–17; *Tempest* IV.1, 148–57.



FIGURE 11.5 *Correggio, Jupiter and Io, c. 1530–31. Vienna, Kunsthistorischesmuseum.*

PHOTO: KHM MUSEUMSVERBAND.

of sensual delight.⁴⁴ *Jupiter*, which is and shows an appearance, stands at the other pole from Cicero's account of the *Zeus* of Phidias; it advertises art as an illusion created from and by means of fantasies.⁴⁵

Forms made by chance can exhibit the origin of image-making in our appetite for the particular, the tenacity of our emotional attachment to images of sensual accidents. The abstraction or fragility of metaphysical assumptions about the teleological activity of the artist who works to ends like nature, or who is guided by the light of higher illumination, is exposed. Correggio shows the forms of the gods are products of our fantasies, whose erotic character is revealed as inseparable from illusionist artifice.

This theme of erotic appetite as a creator of phantasms which materialise as grotesque deformation is explored as a didactic psychomachia in Mantegna's *Pallas expelling the Vices from the Garden of Venus* or *The Triumph of Virtue*, ordered for the Studiolo of Isabella D'Este.⁴⁶ *The Triumph of Virtue* recounts the various forms of fantastic deformation effected by sensuality and overthrown by Minervan virtue. Two gods sculpted in the clouds look down on the dark grove of Venus whose denizens are expelled by Pallas. The followers of Venus who wallow in her pond are monstrously deformed—bestial hybrids appear alongside deformations or mutilations. The unfixed elements of air and water are mediums of transformation, with the latter associated with degeneration into deformation or bestiality. The metamorphoses of Venus are products of fantasy as an act of will, in Augustinian fashion, a deliberate act of perversion which is vanquished and rectified by the reason, personified by Pallas.⁴⁷

44 The painting was one of series of erotic mythologies showing Ganymede, Danae and Leda, commissioned from Correggio by Federico II Gonzaga

45 See Erasmus' praise of Dürer's ability to paint "clouds on a wall" (i.e. "something almost similar to nothing or a dream"), in Summers, *Michelangelo*, 124.

46 On documentation for the Studiolo paintings and use of *fantasia* to signify subject matter and artist's style, see Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 181–6. On *Pallas*, see Keith Christiansen, "The Studiolo of Isabella D'Este and late themes" in *Andrea Mantegna*, 418–68; Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 186–209; Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros*, 145–60. Brummer, *Belvedere*, 228, observes that the Ovidian motto ("otia si tollis, perire Cupidinis arcus", "without idleness, Cupid's bow decays", *Remedia amoris* 139) used by Gianfrancesco Pico in *De Venere* appears on a bank by the pool in *Pallas*. Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* III.1.4, talks of the pond as place of luxury, "palus est luxuria, palus est imtemperentia, palus est incontinentia".

47 Augustine, *Confessions* III.6, discusses the will's power to master false 'phantasms' (i.e. creations of the fantasy, especially in its combinatory capacity), and associates such phantasms with the heresies of the Manicheans; see Bundy, *Theory*, 165–66 et passim.



FIGURE 11.6 *Mantegna, Pallas expelling the Vices from the Garden of Venus, 1502. Louvre, Paris.*

PHOTO © RMN-GRAND PALAIS (MUSÉE DU LOUVRE) / GÉRARD BLOT.

Amongst the deformations of the *Triumph of Virtue* is a nymph tortured by metamorphosis into a tree.⁴⁸ The degradation obviously lies in the descent in the hierarchy of being, commonplace in scenes of sensuality, but there is also a teleological point. To consider wood as the material cause of a sculpture, which achieves its end in the sculpture informed in accordance with the

48 Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 202; Campbell, *Cabinet*, 147; Janson, "Image", 259, all see the nymph-tree as an olive and transcribe the Latin inscription on her banderole (above pseudo-Greek and pseudo-Hebrew), which Lightbown thinks was probably supplied by Isabella's adviser Paride da Ceresara. Janson calls the nymph *Mater virtutum* and links her to Alberti's *Virtus et Mercurius* where Virtue complains about her abuse by Fortune and declares she would rather be any tree trunk than a goddess ("malo truncum aliquem quam deam esse"), with reference to statues of the gods as originally carved from wood. A similar figure, labelled *Virtus deserta* appears in Mantegna's design engraved by Giovan Antonio da Brescia, which shows a man helped up from the pit of folly by Mercury. The companion print, *Virtus combusta*, also exists as a painting (British Museum), showing Ignorance enthroned and a blind woman led to a precipice by various vices.

artist's idea, is distinct from seeing the form of a nymph in the contours of a living tree which has its end and form as tree. The artist's idea, formed from the selection and synthesis of images, shows the imagination working under the judgement while in chance forms it is the freedom to combine and transform that it stressed, at the expense of a final cause. Nature remains the analogy for artifice, but with changed emphasis: the invention of *grottesche* does not correspond to teleological but to generative activity.

Later Renaissance allusions to *grottesche* and chance forms rehearse these parallels. In *Il disegno*, Doni has the painter Pino describe to Art and Nature how he creates *chimere* from the "chaos within my head", like nature's painting of chance forms on stones.⁴⁹ Armenini in *De' veri precetti* III.12, sees the grotesques as developing from the eye's delight in chancing on random marks and reading forms into them, calling them "varied fancies and new forms of strange things, which do not exist in themselves, but create themselves in our mind".⁵⁰ He judges them appropriate for the creation of a visual medium where the eye is entertained by some degree of articulation on flat surfaces, but where sculptural relief or the bright colours of painting would provide too much stimulation.⁵¹ The *grottesche* in this account become a kind of mediation between nothing and something, with their intermediary character stressed by the activity of the mind in seeing shapes into them.

Armenini's discussion of the *grottesche* culminates with a visit to an ancient *grotta* with a statue of Dea natura (i.e. Diana of Ephesus).⁵² The association of the *grottesche* with Dea natura as symbol for *natura naturans* encroaches on the representations of *ornatus mundi* as the depictions of species as it suggests nature viewed as process rather than creation.

The association of *grotta* and *grottesche* goes beyond 'origin' or the dark, underground places from which antiquities return, as nature 'disclosed' by the *grottesche* reveals the conjunction of form and matter.⁵³ The *grottesche* 'imitate' nature in the sense of generative activity which makes things appear or

49 "nella fantasia e nella mia imaginativa, nel caos del mio cervello", Doni, *Disegno* (Venice: Giolito, 1549), excerpted SAC I, 572, 585. He extols "animaletti bizzarri", animals appropriate to *grottesche*—crabs, cicadas and crickets—as instances of nature's variety (ibid., 571). On the theme of nature's playfulness as shown by her freaks, see Bredekamp, *Lure of antiquity*, 68.

50 "diverse fantasie e nuove forme di cose stravaganti, le quali non è che siano così in quelle, ma si creano da sé nell'intelletto nostro", Armenini, *Precetti*, 220.

51 Ibid.

52 Armenini, *Precetti* III. 12, 219–223.

53 On the grotto as 'source' of the *grottesche*, see ibid., 221; Ligorio, entry "Grotta", *Libro dell'antichità*, Turin 8, fols. 152v–153v, excerpt. SAC III, 2672–76; Paleotti, *Discorso intorno*

brings them to light. By contrast, ornament viewed as an enhancing quality helps artifice to achieve perfection and end.

Grottesche, Trophies and the Peopled Scroll

Peopled acanthus scrolls appear in the Porta della Mandorla in Florence Cathedral in the late Trecento, and many of the elements of grotesque ornament—arabesque foliage, fantastic capitals, masks and the use of the putto as an ornamental figure—appear already in Donatello.⁵⁴ Such *all'antica* proto-grotesque ornament is distinguished by its fineness, liveliness, its allusion to occasion and the continuity between ornamental registers (showing putti, garlands, vases, creatures, nymphs) and the actors and instruments of the principal scene. This is particularly evident in Donatello's use of the putto, which moves ambiguously between protagonist, secondary framing figure and ornamental motif.⁵⁵ The putto exemplifies the various ways in which the latter comes alive—whether through the prominent exuberance of festoons and arabesques, the troubling, animate emptiness of masks and the aggressive energies of the putti themselves.⁵⁶

In Donatello the continuity between ornament and central figures or scenes is continuity of invention and of psychological effect, or agency. He exemplifies Dempsey's reading of putti as *spiritelli*, personifications of the natural 'spirits' by which qualities emanated from things, or which carried physical impulses through the body, provoking emotional reactions.⁵⁷ Dempsey sees the vacant mask or *larva* as a related form which bears the relation of a delusive phantasm

alle immagini sacre e profane (Bologna: A. Benacci, 1582, repr. Bologna: A. Forni, 1990), II, 32, who compares the 'monstrous' forms and subterranean shrines to pagan demons.

54 Vasari called the gilded arabesque decoration of Donatello's Cavalcanti *Annunciation* in Santa Croce *alla grottesca* (*Vite* III, 203); see Summers, *Michelangelo*, 146–7; Michael Greenhalgh, *Donatello and his Sources* (London: Duckworth, 1978), esp. 1–30, 84–95, 139–40.

55 See the *Gattamelata* (1453) where putti stand like telamons around the saddle, bear garlands, ride in peopled scrolls on the saddle, and play instruments on the belt of the commander's skirt. Here the putti are one of number of 'winged' or aureole figures including the gorgon, masks and masks within a palmette aureole, probably derived from Etruscan acroteria, which decorate Gattamelata's armour. See H.W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), I, 244–54, II, 151–61.

56 See Dempsey, *Renaissance Putto*, 8, on the festoons called "feste" in fifteenth century sources.

57 Dempsey, *Renaissance Putto*, 38–60 et passim.



FIGURE 11.7 *Donatello, capital of outside Pulpit, Museo dell'opera del duomo, Prato, 1428–38.*
 COURTESY MUSEO DELL'OPERA DEL DUOMO DI PRATO.
 PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

to the 'spirits' personified by the *spiritelli*.⁵⁸ This emphasises that the 'liveliness' which becomes a criterion of Renaissance ornament, so strongly linked with fantasy, should be placed in the realm of sensory impressions ("species" or "similitudes", to use Renaissance language) and their reception and transformation by the inner senses. These lively ornaments appear in Donatello alongside other uses of the imagination in figuring intense emotional states and in the use of fantastic mimesis in creating the illusion of spatial recession.

The peopled acanthus or scroll, to whose personae Donatello gave such vitality, offered a fluid range of possibilities for working out the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 96–106.

relations between decoration and what it decorated. It offered a continuum of phytomorph ornament, whether we see trophies, masks, candelabra, etc. as alternating with foliage or 'growing' out of it. It could aggregate images of disparate things or motifs, mediate the affective character of histories or sculptures, and—in its closeness to the garland—permitted the allusions to fame explored above. In particular, it served as a vehicle for the diffusion of an antiquarian style, which could be applied to all kinds of objects, transmitted through patterns and printing; the *Trattato* of Francesco di Giorgio lists "dalfine [delfini], spiritelli . . . mostruosi animali, come se arpie, et altri simili ricinti e fogliati ornamenti".⁵⁹ This list summarises the decorative detail in sculptors influenced by Donatello, such as Desiderio da Settignano, Mino da Fiesole, Antonio Federighi, Giovanni di Stefano and Lorenzo Marrina (see Chapter 10, fig. 10). In this proto-grotesque decoration, the vigour and pathos of Donatello's ornament is restrained into a more stylised mode marked by delicacy and fantasy. The particular success of this style came in marble relief, by such masters as Pietro Lombardo, Bregno or Andrea del Sansovino; the refinement of their carving and the restrained colour of the stone subdues the metamorphic energies of the content.

The appearance of peopled acanthus and candelabra relief on tombs places it within an epideictic or triumphal context, aligning it with 'occasional' ornament such as festoons.⁶⁰ To this extent, the relief in the Roman wall tombs of Bregno (1418–1506) could be seen to show the artificial florescence appropriate to monuments to fame and to the passage to the afterlife.⁶¹ Bregno shows the

59 Francesco di Giorgio, *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare*, ed. C. Maltese and L. Degrossi Maltese (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1967), I, 65. On the importance of Francesco di Giorgio's work in the Ducal Palace, Urbino for the diffusion of candelabra ornament, and his native Siena as a centre for fantastic ornament, see Acidini Luchinat, *Grottesca*, 163; Dacos, *La Découverte*, 58–9. For engraved *grottesche* see Bartsch xxv for the prints of Nicoletto da Modena, Zoan Andrea or Giovanni Antonio da Brescia; Miller, *Italian Ornament Prints*, 68–110, on designs by Amico Aspertini, engraved by Giovanni Pietro da Birago and Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, designs of Perino del Vaga and Enea Vico engraved by Nicoletto da Modena, Agostino Veneziano, and the Master of the Die. On the congeniality of the *grottesche* to print, see Howard and Snodin, *Ornament*.

60 Cf. the heavy peopled scrolls on Filarete's bronze doors for St Peter's (completed 1445).

61 Amongst the monuments attributed to Bregno and his followers are the tombs to Cardinals Cristoforo della Rovere, Domenico della Rovere, Basso della Rovere, Giorgio Costa and Antoniotto Pallavicini in Santa Maria del Popolo; to Diotisalvi Neroni, Cardinals Juan Diego de Coca, Domenico Capranica, Tebaldi (attributed by Frommel to Paolo Romano) and Archbishop Benedetto Soproanzi in Santa Maria sopra Minerva; to Cardinal D'Albret in Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Cardinal d'Auxia in Santa Sabina, Cardinal Pietro Riario and Raffaele della Rovere in SS. Apostoli; Costanza Ammanati in Sant'Agostino, Bartolomeo Roverella in San Clemente, Cardinal Alano Coetivy in San Prassede, Meliaduce Cigada



FIGURE 11.8 *School of Andrea Bregno, Funerary monument to Diotisalvi Neroni, Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 1482.*

PHOTO: SAILKO, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA 3.0, DESATURATED FROM ORIGINAL.

tomb as a place where the return of antique ornament from oblivion figures the ritual of death and the passage into eternal life.⁶² Bregno was a friend of the Vatican librarian Platina, an associate of Leto's academicians and a collector of antiquities; he contributed to the standardisation of classicizing epigraphy.⁶³ The tomb, like the sculpture garden, is a place where antiquities become meaningful through word-image configurations.

If monumental sculpture in its theme of victory over death through fame and salvation carries allusions to triumph, the ornament has the task of showing that something is celebrated.⁶⁴ Like the *spolia* discussed above, *grotesche* initially appear with triumphal figurations such as trophies and later become a field where the artist's manner exhibits itself through copious and fantastic

in San Giovanni Battista dei Genovesi and the relief below the tomb of Nicholas of Cusa in San Pietro in Vincoli. Bregno also worked on the former High Altar in Santa Maria del Popolo, the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Quercia, Viterbo and contributed to the Piccolomini Chapel, Siena. On difficulties of attribution, see Claudio Strinati, "Bregno e Filarete", in *Andrea Bregno*, 199. Frommel, "Formazione e evoluzione architettonica di Andrea Bregno", in *Andrea Bregno*, 171–97, sees Bregno's work as superseded by Andrea Sansovino's tombs of Ascanio Cardinal Sforza and Cardinal Girolamo Basso in the retro-choir of Santa Maria del Popolo (1505 and 1507). Delicate *all'antica* relief and the arch format appear on Michelangelo's tomb of Julius II.

- 62 For Bregno's use of antique ornament, see Claudia La Malfa, "L'assenza indiziaria delle grottesche nella scultura romana del Quattrocento", *La forma del Rinascimento: Donatello, Andrea Bregno, Michelangelo e la scultura a Roma nel Quattrocento* ed. Claudio Crescentini and Claudio Strinati (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2010), 133–140, who rejects the term *grotesche* for Bregno's decoration; Greenhalgh, "Andrea Bregno and the Antique", in *Andrea Bregno*, 245–63, argues against his direct use of Roman ornament, whose exuberance he sees as subdued by Bregno.
- 63 On Bregno's antiquities collection (notably the *Belvedere Torso*), see Matilde De Angelis d'Ossat, "La conoscenza dell'antico. Scultori e collezionisti a Roma nel xv secolo", in *Andrea Bregno*, 265–75; Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 82–5. On his epigraphy, see Starleen Meyer and Paul Shaw, "Towards a New Understanding of the Revival of Roman Capitals and the Achievement of Andrea Bregno", in *Andrea Bregno*, 277–331; Starleen Meyer, "Bregno e l'epigrafia classicheggiante a Roma", in *Andrea Bregno, Giovanni Santi e la cultura adriatica del Rinascimento*, ed. Giuliana Gardelli (Rome: Erreciemme, 2007), 59–95.
- 64 The triumphal character of monumental sculpture is most developed in Venice in the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento, in the tombs of the doges in the Frari and ss. Giovanni e Paolo, mainly by the Lombardi. The monument to Doge Andrea Vendramin (now in ss. Giovanni e Paolo, 1488–93) by Tullio and Antonio Lombardo with its statues of Roman captains and relief tondos which evoke the Arch of Constantine goes furthest in evoking a triumphal arch. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity* 113, calls these tombs "triumphal portals to the afterlife" and "ceremonial gateways to the Venetian political present".

inventions.⁶⁵ The distinction is not just of motif but of the relation of decoration to architectural context. Early or proto-grotesque ornament which imitates pendant objects, like garlands, or objects arranged as trophies is often deployed on an arch or exiguous painted architecture.⁶⁶ In the grotesque versions of the peopled acanthus, however dense, the ornament is still designed to have a framing function and serves as a support to which objects are appended as decorations. These *grottesche* have their most florid examples in the prints of Zoan Andrea, Giovan Antonio da Brescia and Nicoletto da Modena and could be seen to conflate trophy ornament with the peopled scroll.⁶⁷ They also treat ornament as a range of precious objects to be collected and inserted. This association of trophy and *grottesche* persists; Lomazzo calls them “trofeo/Di fantasme d'Istorie, et sogni sgombri”.⁶⁸

Sketchbooks of antiquities share features in their presentation of ancient ornament which predispose them to assemblages of *grottesche*.⁶⁹ One is to show it as a range of motifs and objects (artefacts, plants, animals, humans, putti and mythological or fantastic creatures) which are reduced to a single scale—as

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- 65 On the relation of triumph and *grottesche*, see Morel, *Grotesques*, 92–93, who rejects their similarity, but limits himself to comparison of literary *trionfi* or *canti carnascialeschi* and later Renaissance *grottesche*, rather than the affinities of trophies and candelabra.
- 66 See Pinturicchio's Bufalini Chapel (c. 1483–85), Santa Maria in Aracoeli, where a candelabra framing a fresco appears beside an arch within the history, with relief trophies; Dacos, “De Pinturicchio à Michelangelo di Pietro: les premières grotesques romaines” in *Roma nella svolta*, 332, judges the motifs to be based on antique reliefs.
- 67 See Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, “Peopled Scrolls”, 20–21, on Severan peopled scrolls, such as the reliefs from the Vatican Grotte. Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 150, discusses Nicoletto's visit to the Domus Aurea in 1507 and Giovanni Antonio's activity in Rome from 1506. Giovanni Antonio copied the pilasters in the Uffizi since the late 1500s, formerly in the Della Valle collection; see Christian, “*Instauratio* and *Pietas*”. The Grotte Vaticane reliefs were conserved in the Chapel of John VIII in Old St Peter's; the Grotte Vaticane and Uffizi reliefs appear in modified form in Pilaster 9 of the Vatican Logge; see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 68 and *Le Logge di Raffaello* (2008), 44. For the grotesques of Zoan Andrea, Giovan Antonio da Brescia and Nicoletto da Modena, see Bartsch xxv; Hind, *Early Italian Engraving* v, pls 554–66, 593–99, 607–09, 689–95.
- 68 Lomazzo, *Rime e imitazioni de i grotteschi usati da' pittori* (1587), ed. Alessandra Ruffino (Manziana, Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2006), 11; the poem is entitled “Capitolo dove si dimostra che cosa sia grottesco, e la sua origine” and numbered *[g]. Cf. Lomazzo's discussion of trophies as ornaments comprised of instruments, *Trattato* VI.46, 349–51.
- 69 Not all sketchbooks of antiquities contain *grottesche*; the Fossombrone sketchbook, attributed to Raphael's workshop, has few drawings of ornament and those studies, like the acanthus decoration (82v, 84v), do not stress the fantastic character of the design. See Nesselrath, *Das Fossombroner Skizzenbuch* (London: Warburg Institute, 1993).



FIGURE 11.9 *Nicoletto da Modena, drawing of grotesque ornament, c. 1507.*

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Vitruvius complained—and mingled or transformed. The cancellation of scale permits metaphoric equivocations (e.g. dolphin-torch-cornucopia-acanthus scroll). The *grottesche* typify presentation of ancient ornament as a range of images which can be aggregated and reconfigured in a fantasy habitat.

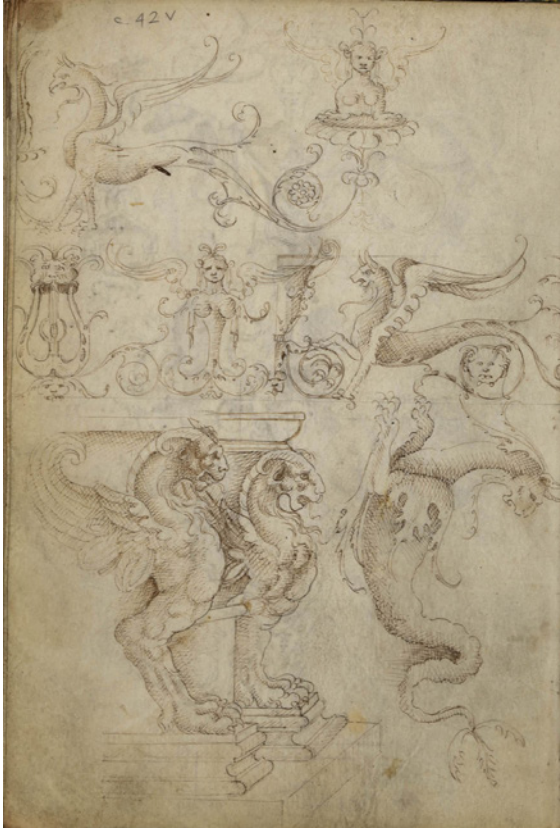


FIGURE 11.10 *Giuliano da Sangallo, Taccuino senese, c. 1490–1516, 42v, ornamental designs. Biblioteca comunale degli Intronati, Siena.*
 PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA COMUNALE DEGLI INTRONATI.

The *grotesche* thus offer models for standardisation while also presenting conditions or perimeters for fantastic elaboration. As Francisco de Holanda noted, the *grotesche* do however follow certain rules of substitution, based on the analogy between equivalent members in different species, so that a head corresponds to a head, legs to a fish tail, etc.⁷⁰ Such substitutions reflect the laws

⁷⁰ Francisco de Holanda, *Dialogues on Painting*, 61–63; the context is the old sophistic theme of the artist's deception as 'truer' than an accurate representation would be. The discussion concerns whether things imaginary but decorous are more false than things correct but out of place.

which govern artificial invention as much as nature's laws of design, testing the modes of resemblance and the limits of visual relation.

The *grottesche* show a distinct decorative pattern, which exhibits the virtues of artistic invention (liveliness, variety, grace) while possessing the possibility for continuity and the capacity to carry the plethora of fragments which constituted the ornaments of antiquarian study. They abstract a plant motif into a series of symmetrical volutes or vertically arranged palmettes and use this 'stem' as a support for a series of *all'antica* objects and their transformation into imaginary creatures; these trophy-laden candelabra then play with the competing associations of growth and suspension. The *grottesche* foreground the spatial orientation which we bring to our reading of decorations and then present contradictory or impossible structures, as Vitruvius complained.

The continuity of ornament, traditionally shown in regenerative vegetal motifs or in the rationality of geometric pattern has its artificial counterpart in the continuous activity of the fantasy, and its capacity to accommodate all images, all memories (or *memorie*) and order them according to its processes of arrangement and invention. This appears in the endlessly varied yet repetitive candelabra inventions of antiquarian artists, like the *Taccuino Senese* of Giuliano da Sangallo and the Parma codex (MS Parm. 1535) ascribed to Amico Aspertini.⁷¹ In each case serpentine hybrid or phytomorph creatures and grotesque candelabra alternate with studies of other modes of disposing antique ornament, such as the influential 'hieroglyphic' frieze of San Lorenzo fuori le mura (Aspertini, Codex Wolfegg, fol. 27v–28; MS Parm. 1535, 8) or panoplies and triumphal arches (*Taccuino Senese*, 22v–26r, 44r).⁷² The *Taccuino senese* displays sustained interest in kinds of space to be filled with ornament, whether the geometric divisions of a vault (13v, 37r), the articulation of the triumphal arch, or relief and tomb sculpture where the whole narrative space is figured.

In the *Hypnerotomachia* grotesque type ornament appears throughout, from panelling to dress to fountains, silverware and ephemera. It displays contiguity with emblems, 'hieroglyphic' pictograms and *spolia*. In the *Hypnerotomachia*, the relationship with the celebration of *natura naturans* is explicit, as is the theme of fantastic invention, the link with symbols and the triumph. The

71 See Marzia Faietti and Daniela Scaglietti Kelescian, *Amigo Aspertini* (Modena: Articoli Editori in Modena, 1995), 223–27; Bober, *Amico Aspertini*; Claudia La Malfa, *Pintoricchio a Roma: la seduzione dell'antico* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2009), 68–71. See Dacos, *La Découverte* 63, figs. 80–81, for Pinturicchio's candelabra studies and their appearance on a pilaster in the Buffalini Chapel, Santa Maria in Aracoeli (1483–85).

72 On serpentine phytomorph creatures see inter alia Aspertini, MS Parm. 1535, 69; *Taccuino Senese*, 40v–43v.

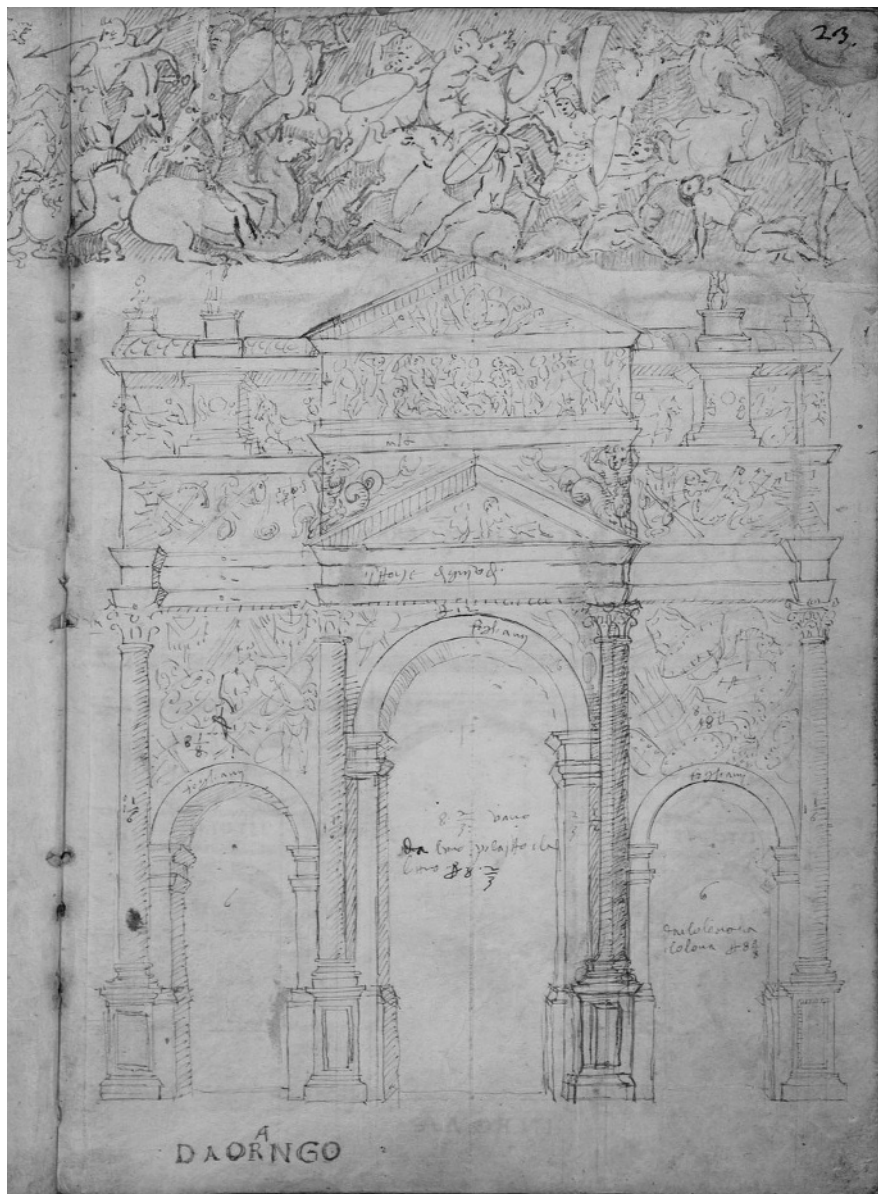


FIGURE 11.11 Giuliano da Sangallo, Taccuino senese, 23r, study of the triumphal arch at Orange. Biblioteca comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA COMUNALE DEGLI INTRONATI.

niendo in uno capo di Ciconia, cū il rostro alla bocca aperta duno monstro cum refupinato uolto, & erano alcuni spōdili tra la bocca & il rostro infuti. Gliquali capi per capillatura erano ifrondati luno oppofito allaltro, faceuano referto di foglie lorificio del dicto uaso, Sopra gli oruli delq̃ le innodato pendeua uno linteamine uerso il suo imo, & le tenue extremitate deflue pendeuano sotto gli noduli, Cum omni ornato di factura cōpetēte ad tale loco & materia. Et in medio sopra gli uerticuli affideua una faccia circunallata passamente di Puello.



Et cum tali & fimiglianti liniamenti decoratamente se extendea il zophoro. Il quale copriua una decentissima Coronice di omni politura di artificio composta. Sopra laquale nella piana ad perpendiculo del proiecto super astituto nel ordine delle quadrangule erano uasi ueterrimamente deformati cū ordinata distantia statuiti, piu di tre pedi altiusculi di Calcedonico, alcuni di Achates, tali di uermigliaceo Amethisto, & alcuni di granata & di Iaspide, alternati di colore, di uaria & insigne operatura subtilissimamente celatati, cum la corpulentia di lacunule intorquate & recte præcipuamēte decorata. Et cum amaestreuole & excellēte Anse.

Allordine & linea di ciascuna gioia sopra la coronice, erano aptamente infixi trabecule quadrate alte pedi septe, di lucente oro interuacue, cū superadicta extensione di fimiglianti trabeculi di sopra gli recti ambiente. Et per transuerso traiectati ad opera topiaria cum regulata partitione decentemente conueniuano. Intēdādo che fora degli uasi negli angoli degli parieti situati, & il trabeculo & la uite iseme uscuiāo. Ma fora degli reliq̃ uasi, o uero una uite, o uero uno cōuoluolo di specie uariato doro, alternādo ascēdeuāo. Et sup̃ icumbāti ad gli trāsuerfati trabeculi, cū copiosa extēsiōe di discoli rami, luno alaltro mutuamēte cū elegante confede-

FIGURE 11.12 *Hypnerotomachia*, sig. f5r.

POSNER MEMORIAL COLLECTION, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES, PITTSBURGH, PA.

Hypnerotomachia also demonstrates the congeniality of print to the *grotesche*, and the way that it presents decorative design as applicable throughout art forms.

By the late Quattrocento, the *grotesche* already show a tendency to spread through various registers and media, as we see in Pinturicchio's decoration in the Basso della Rovere Chapel (1484), the St Jerome or Della Rovere Chapel (1488–90), the Costa Chapel (1489) and the vault of the Sacristy (1508), all in Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.⁷³ Pinturicchio decorated pilasters, window frames, lunettes and vault pendentives with *grotesche* on a gold ground, simulating mosaic. These harmonised with the gilded candelabra ornament framing his altarpieces in the Della Rovere and Basso della Rovere chapels, and with the monuments by Bregno and his workshop in the Costa, Della Rovere, Basso della Rovere and Montemirabile Chapels, with their candelabra, masks and garlands. The *grotesche*, moving from 'mosaic' to paint to relief also provide the ornamental context for illusionism—the Basso della Rovere Chapel features grisaille with simulated relief panels and marble benches and painted porphyry columns with gilded capitals, between which strips of grotesque 'mosaic' glint.⁷⁴ This association of *grotesche* with mosaic appears up to the seventeenth century, in Daniello Bartoli's description of grotesquework as a "mosaic of unrelated things [*spropositi*] joined together".⁷⁵

73 On the Della Rovere Chapel and Basso della Rovere Chapel decorations, see Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 133–36; *Umanesimo e primo Rinascimento in S. Maria del Popolo*, eds Roberto Cannata, Anna Cavallaro, Claudio Strinati (Roma: De Luca, 1981), 61–74. Dacos, "De Pinturicchio à Michelangelo di Pietro", 325–40, sees the Della Rovere Chapel *grotesche* as the first imitations of the Domus Aurea and their ground colour as a reference to the Volta gialla of the Domus; she identifies Michelangelo di Pietro as the artist of the grotesques of the Della Rovere Chapel and of octagonal 'mosaic' panels in the ceiling of the Sala dei Semidei in the palace of Domenico della Rovere. The name of "Michelangelo da Lucca" appears in the vault of the cryptoporticus of the Domus. Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 134, calls the window jambs of the Della Rovere Chapel the "earliest known ornamental designs inspired by the Domus Aurea" and the "first known polychrome *grotesche* in Renaissance painting". See La Malfa, "The Chapel of San Girolamo in Santa Maria del popolo in Rome. New Evidence for the Discovery of the Domus Aurea", *JWCI* 63 (2000), 259–70; J. Schulz, "Pinturicchio". La Malfa, *Pinturicchio*, 41–51, dates the Della Rovere Chapel to the late 1470s. See Dacos, *Découverte*, 66–69, on Pinturicchio's formulaic deployment and dissemination of candelabra *grotesche*. The polychrome *grotesche* are echoed in the Montemirabile Chapel (post 1479), later the Baptistry of the church.

74 See Sandström, *Levels*, 160–64, on the influence of Roman triumphal arches on the decorative disposition.

75 "un mosaico di spropositi insieme connessi", in Bartoli, *La ricreazione del savio*, Bologna 1676, repr. *Trattatisti e narratori del Seicento*, ed. Ezio Raimondi (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi,



FIGURE 11.13 Pinturicchio, *Basso Della Rovere Chapel*, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, 1484.
 PHOTO: MIGUEL HERMOSO CUESTA, LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA 3.0.

The allusion to other kinds of decoration appears also in Pinturicchio's decorations in the palace of Giuliano della Rovere, Rome (1490), Perugino's Sala delle Udienze, Collegio del Cambio (Perugia, 1500) and Filippino Lippi's use of *grotesche* in the Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence and in the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome.⁷⁶ Pinturicchio repeatedly shows *grotesche* in 'mosaic' vaults, in the Palazzo of Domenico della Rovere (now Palazzo dei Penitenzieri), Rome, in the Sala del Credo and Sala delle Sibille in the Vatican Borgia apartments, in the Basso della Rovere Chapel, in the Piccolomini Library, Siena and in the choir of Santa Maria del Popolo.⁷⁷ In the

1960), 555. Bartoli likens *grotesche* to dream and says that they are more praised the more the parts are taken from distant and absurd forms—an allusion to the combinatory imagination.

76 On Lippi's indebtedness to Pinturicchio for the illusionism of the Carafa Chapel, see La Malfa, *Pinturicchio*, 106–07; Sandström, *Levels*.

77 On the Palace of Domenico della Rovere, see D. Redig de Campos, "Il soffitto dei semidei del Pinturicchio ed altri dipinti suoi restauri nel palazzo di Domenico della Rovere", in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Mario Salmi* (Rome: De Luca, 1962), 11, 363–75; Anna Cavallaro and Maria Giulia Aurigemma, *Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo*; Maria Giulia Aurigemma, "Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo: novità documentarie", in *Roma nella svolta*, 281–96; idem "Il palazzo cardinalizio di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo", in *Roma, centro ideale della cultura dell'Antico nei secoli XV e XVI. Da Martino V al Sacco di Roma, 1417–1527*, ed. Silvia Danesi Squarzina (Milan: Electa, 1989),



FIGURE 11.14 *Detail of the monument in fig. 13.*

loggia of the palazzina of Giuliano della Rovere (now the Sala della Fontana of Palazzo Colonna ai ss. Apostoli), large candelabra motifs appear alongside doubled figures copied from antique sculptures, such as the *Nile* and Borghese

160–68; Anna Cavallaro, “Draghi, mostri e semidei. Una rivisitazione fiabesca dell’antico nel soffitto pinturicchiesco del Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere”, in *Roma, centro ideale*, 143–68, on the mingling of antiquities (sarcophagi, the frieze of the maritime theatre at Hadrian’s Villa) with medieval bestiary allegories in the Sala dei Semidei. The “cortiletto” of the palace was adorned with *sgraffito* showing trophies.

relief and, again, mosaic.⁷⁸ These allusions are adapted to *grotesche* design by symmetric doubling, by placement within a peopled scroll or candelabra, and by the addition of trophies or triumphal insignia.⁷⁹ Pinturicchio's capacity to rework and miniaturise antiquities into *grotesche* will be developed by Raphael in the Logge.⁸⁰ Pinturicchio's handling of the appearance of *grotesche* in the scenographic illusion of the painted loggia will likewise be advanced by Raphael and his workshop.

Acidini Luchinat notes the Sala delle Udienze of the Cambio, Perugia as the first case of the *grotesche* as a decorative mode repeated through all levels and materials of a scheme, in the intarsia of Domenico del Tasso and Antonio da Mercatello and the frescoes, executed principally by Perugino.⁸¹ The Cambio again shows Pinturicchio-type *grotesche* as the ornament of a fictive loggia whose 'arches' reveal personified virtues and their exemplars, ordered according to a topical-planetary scheme.⁸² Painted pilasters with fictive mosaic

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- 78 See Dacos, *Découverte* 67. Cavallaro, "Gli affreschi di Pinturicchio nella palazzina di Giuliano della Rovere ai Ss. Apostoli", in *Un'idea di Roma. Società, arte e cultura tra umanesimo e Rinascimento* ed. Laura Fortini (Rome: Associazione Roma nel Rinascimento, 1993), 53–71. In the Sala dei Profeti e degli Apostoli in the Palace of Domenico della Rovere the gold-ground acanthus scrolls of the spandrels carry medallions derived from ancient coins; see Cavallaro, *Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere*, 208–13.
- 79 The figures derived from the Borghese relief in the vault carry placards inscribed SPQR; doubled satyrs in the adjoining spandrels bear trophies. See Dacos, *Découverte*, figs. 90; 93. The Petrucci palace vault shows figures in triumphal chariots.
- 80 On the derivation of isolated motifs from the Domus Aurea (e.g. chained satyrs from the Volta Gialla), see Dacos, *Découverte* 52–53.
- 81 Luchinat, "Grottesca", 194. The decorations appear to have been finished by 1500, the date placed by Perugino on his self-portrait in the cycle.
- 82 Under Mars, captains and rulers represent Fortitude and Temperance; under Mercury are Prudence and Justice, 'governing' lawgivers, rulers and philosophers; Apollo occupies the centre of the vault while Venus is above the seat of the Cambio and Luna by the windows and the street. Epigraphs appear beneath the portrait of Cato at the entrance, by the Virtues and under the self-portrait of Perugino, celebrating him as the re-discoverer of art. The Nativity and Transfiguration are depicted beneath Jupiter, and under Saturn, the Sibyls with Prophets holding scrolls with excerpts from Lactantius. The sources are thought to be Cicero, *De officiis* and Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, which is topically ordered, with exemplars presented under the headings of virtues. On the sources and their use by Francesco Maturanzio, held to be the inventor of the programme, see Roberto Guerrini, "Dal testo all'immagine. La pittura di storia nel Rinascimento", in *Memoria dell'antico* 11, 51–60; idem, "Decorazioni parietali: fonti letterarie ed iconografia" in *Il Collegio del Cambio in Perugia* ed. Pietro Scarpellini (Perugia: Cassa Risparmio, 1998), 107–34. See also Giovan Battista Fidanza, "Gli arredi lignei", *Cambio*, 191–228; Dacos, "La volta della sala dell'Udienza: pianeti e grottesche", *Cambio*, 135–52, who attributes depictions of antique medals and gems to Perugino and derives the ornamental motifs



FIGURE 11.15 *Perugino, Sala delle Udienze, Collegio del Cambio, Perugia, 1498–1500.*
 COURTESY NOBILE COLLEGIO DEL CAMBIO, PERUGIA.
 PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

support ornamental objects affixed like trophies; they culminate in a vault where medals of the gods in their chariots are surrounded by dense *grotesche* and ‘mosaic’ grounds. The scheme is epideictic; the bright colours and florid forms give further splendour to the allusions to relief, mosaic or cameo medallions. The *grotesche* executed on the vault of the Biblioteca Piccolomini, Siena, similarly provide ‘antique’ richness, with liberal use of gold, in an epideictic decorative scheme.⁸³

The appearance of *grotesche* in painted mosaic suggests the interest in the *fogliami* of early mosaics exhibited in Rucellai’s *Zibaldone* and the Codex Escorialensis and links grotesque ornament with a kind of decoration whose optical effects move the spectator’s eye through a context. The *grotesche* also cultivate bewilderment which forces the viewer to keep looking until the complex unity of a scheme is grasped; they do through decorative form something akin to what Byzantine ornament did through reflected light. The *grotesche*

from Pinturicchio in the Basso della Rovere Chapel and the palazzina of Giuliano della Rovere. The adjoining Chapel of San Giovanni, decorated by Giannicola di Paolo, similarly has lively grotesques against vivid red and gold mosaic grounds.

83 The 1502 contract stipulates *grotesche* with “fantasie, colori e spartimenti”, repr. Dacos, *Découverte*, 68.

share with Byzantine decoration an element of fantasy but in the grotesques it is associated with metamorphosis as an area of playful deformation. The association between mosaic and grotesques also points to the *grottesche* as varied aggregates, composed of many miniature particulars. The early *grottesche* offered a mode of working with antique ornament as *spolia* or collage; they take over the ebullient vegetal ornament, variety and fragmentation of mosaic, as well as the accidental likenesses associated with marble.⁸⁴ They therefore provided a powerful mode of synthesizing pattern-book models with the fragment or mosaic—and with the role of fantasy in representing or modifying antiquities, evident already in Mantegna.⁸⁵

The relation of the *grottesche* to the ornamental study of antique objects is taken to an extreme point in Filippino Lippi's Strozzi Chapel (1489–1502).⁸⁶ Here again the ornamentation is linked to the notion of trophy and triumphal display. The distinction between decoration and narrative however breaks down as the latter is crowded with fantastic evocations of archaeological detail, to the point that they threaten to overwhelm the narrative efficacy.⁸⁷ In Lippi, the dominant characteristic of the ornament is its applied character, and from this results the sense that the actors of the scene, despite their display of *affetti*, are frozen and smothered by decorative accretions animated

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- 84 The association of *grottesche* with *spoglie* appears in a 1512 verse by Aretino on the ruins of Rome and *tempus edax rerum*; it opens “Grotesche spoglie ludi strali e armi”, lists trophies, triumphs, epigraphs, poems, artworks and spectacle buildings to end bathetically with “Arastri: zappe: vomeri: e ficture”—“ploughs, pickaxes, ploughshares and stakes”; see Dacos, *Roma quanta fuit*, 24; Brown, *Venice*, 225. This kind of parody taxonomy, with its mixture of great and vulgar objects, is typical of the Renaissance literary burlesque and its imitation of the *grottesche*. An ancient precedent lies in the *cento* in reuse of Virgilian passages to create poems that are quotidian (*De panificio*) or obscene (the end of Ausonius' *Cento Nuptialis*, Luxurius' *Epithalamium Fridi*).
- 85 See the title page to Christoph Jamnitzer, *Neuw Grottesken Buch* (Nuremberg, 1610) where craftsmen purchase from a stall individual, three-dimensional *grottesche*, some of which come to life and fly off. Reproduced in Howard and Snodin, *Ornament*, 47.
- 86 See Jonathan Katz Nelson and Patrizia Zambrano, *Filippino Lippi* (Milan: Electa, 2004), 513–55. The chapel shows *St Philip exorcising a demon at the altar of Mars* and *Drusiana resurrected by St John the Evangelist*.
- 87 Vasari in both editions of the *Vite* and Borghini in *Il Riposo* (1584) call Filippino Lippi the first artist to “dar luce alle grottesche”, “che desse luce alle grottesche à similitudine delle antiche”, in Luciano Berti and Umberto Baldini, *Filippino Lippi* (Florence: Edizioni d'Arte, 1991), 242. On Lippi's studies after the Domus Aurea, see Ames-Lewis, *Intellectual Life*, 130, fig. 66.

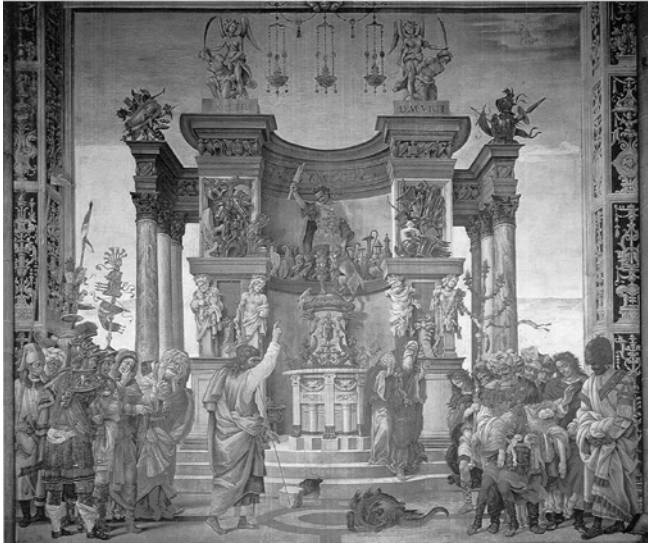


FIGURE 11.16 *Filippino Lippi, St Philip exorcising a demon at the altar of Mars. Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, 1489–1502.*

COURTESY PREFETTURA DI FIRENZE.

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

as applied decoration.⁸⁸ (We might recall that the Strozzi Chapel was imitated repeatedly by Gustave Moreau.) The desire to vary and enliven antique decoration dominates the invention, attenuating the narrative vitality of the principle scenes, and giving uneasy life to the ornament. This animation appears in scenes which concern supernatural life, in Christian miracle and pagan magic.⁸⁹ The altar of Mars in *St Philip exorcising a demon at the altar of Mars* is the heart of the ornamental configuration in the Chapel; as in Signorelli's Cappella San Brizio in Orvieto cathedral, the liveliness of forms created by the fantasy appears in an image of false religion and its prodigies.

88 Vasari links Lippi's "strani capricci" and "varietà di bizzarie" with his careful study of ancient artefacts, *Vite* III, 560, 565. Lippi's study for the *Resurrection of Drusiana* (Uffizi 186E) shows a more direct design, with dramatic interaction and tense movements creating a vivid narrative. Sandström, *Levels*, 59, reads the elaborate architecture to the *Raising of Drusiana* in the Strozzi Chapel as a backcloth.

89 Campbell, "Fare una cosa morta parer viva", 606–8, notes the image of the *sudarium* of Veronica, a further miraculous image, in the frame above St Philip.

In Filippino Lippi's other exercise in *grotesche* decoration, in the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome, the fantastic quality of the grotesques has been seen in their lighting as well as their contents.⁹⁰ Deliberately unreal use of colouring or light appears in Sodoma's decoration in the cloister of Monte Oliveto Maggiore or in Gaudenzio Ferrari's *grotesche* in the St Margaret Chapel, Santa Maria della Grazie, Varallo, where exaggerated tonal juxtapositions make the figures seem like fleeting shadows.⁹¹ The delicate *chiaroscuro* of Amico Aspertini's *grotesche* in San Frediano, Lucca, gives an eerie, dream-like quality which separates them in their world of artifice.⁹² In these varied cases we see a movement away from the illusionist applied decoration of Pinturicchio, towards more overt or aggressive anti-naturalism. The stylisation suggests either forms in rapid movement or revealed fleetingly in unstable, fluttering light.

The most extreme cases are Luca Signorelli's decorations in the Cappella Nova or Cappella San Brizio (1499–1504) where the *grotesche* cover the dado, beneath the *Last Judgement* cycle with its disturbing scenes of the Coming of Antichrist.⁹³ These seething grotesques, which spring into life as though in frenzy or nightmare, frame images of the poets and again signal the associations of the fantasy with poetry, prophecy and heresy. These savage metamorphoses frame black 'cameos' illustrating the classical poets and Dante whose 'prophetic' gifts consist of visions of Hades and Purgatory or scenes of strife. Only in the case of Dante and Statius or Virgil, framed by scenes from

90 Acidini Luchinat, "Grotesca", 179, speaks of fluttering shadows of *chiaroscuro*, "sbattimenti di chiaroscuro" and sees the sudden colour shifts without *sfumato* in the *grotesche* as contributing to Mannerist handling of colour. On the 'hieroglyphic' images of the vault and frieze, composed of liturgical objects, like Roman frieze of lustral objects at San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, see Enrico Parlato, "La decorazione della capella Carafa: allegoria ed emblematica negli affreschi di Filippino Lippi alla Minerva", in *Roma centro ideale*, 169–84.

91 Sodoma's panels of *grotesche* (1505–08) with their images of monstrously deformed men, were derived from the *Weltchronik* of Hermann Schedel (Nuremberg, 1493); see Luchinat "Grotesca", 174.

92 See *ibid.*, 177, on Aspertini's Lucca *grotesche*, which (following Roberto Longhi) she reads as a key to the artist's temperament.

93 See Tom Henry and Laurence B. Kamer, *Luca Signorelli: The Complete Paintings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001). André Chastel, "L'Apocalypse en 1500: La fresque de l'Antéchrist à la Chapelle Saint-Brice d'Orvieto", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance* 14 (1952), 124–40, interprets the decorations as an allusion to Savonarola. Neither Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 218–19, Dacos, *Découverte*, nor Luchinat, "Grotesca", 172–72, see San Brizio as based on the Domus Aurea.



FIGURE 11.17 *Luca Signorelli, Cappella San Brizio, Orvieto cathedral, detail of frieze. 1499–1501.*

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PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIART.

Purgatorio I–VIII, beneath the *Crowning of the Elect*, is the prophetic character of the poetic imagination declared positively.

The gold ground of the dado suggests mosaic, stamped leather or book illumination, appropriate to the poetic allusions, while the cameo scenes refer to antique inserts; the dark apertures from which the poets stare adds another level of illusion.⁹⁴ Read as ‘mosaic’, the dado suggests the *fogliami* of early church ornament; read as book illumination, they imply reference to

94 Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 213, 306, n. 77, notes R. San Juan's claim in “The Illustrious Poets in Signorelli's frescoes for the Cappella Nuova of Orvieto Cathedral”, *JWCI* 52 (1989), 71–84, that Signorelli's invention was anticipated by the frontispiece of a 1488 manuscript of Didymus Alexandrinus' *De spiritu sancto* (Pierpoint Morgan Library, M. 496), fol. 2r. Another apparent reference to manuscript illumination appears in the similarity to white vine stem ornament in the oak ‘tendrils’ which decorates the pilasters framing Melozzo da Forlì's *Sixtus IV, with his Nephews and Platina* (c. 1477–78, Vatican Pinacoteca). See also Dacos, *Découverte*, 61–62, on the influence of the Codex Escorialensis on illumination; Cavallaro, “Draghi”, 156–58, on the affinity of Pinturicchio's ornamental style to illumination.

the monsters or *grilles* of manuscript illumination. Read as *all'antica* decorations framing cameos depicting violence or the Underworld, they suggest the subterranean, Hadean aspect of antiquity. Even the painted candelabra by the chapel entrance use the familiar silhouette to construct a decoration showing souls tortured by demons.

Acidini Luchinat compared Signorelli's treatment of colour in the bodies of his grotesques to effects of an alchemical operation, to stress their unnatural character—an allusion consistent with the theme of the works of Antichrist.⁹⁵ The surges of green and red which flow through these bodies is indeed a source of their horror, suggestive of vegetative and animal spirits transfused into an interlace and bringing it to fierce life. If Hall noted the ornamental character of *cangiante* colouring, Signorelli takes it to extremes of artificial liveliness.⁹⁶ *Energieia* as a desideratum of artistic depiction clashes harshly with actualisation as the perfection of form. The 'perfecting' and 'life-giving' activity of the artist is scrutinised with vehemence, with the ambiguity of art's metaphoric character exposed in the livid glare of the *grotesche*.

The anti-naturalistic renderings of the *grotesche* move them closer to forms discerned in random shapes, and give the sense of the rapid movement of the figures themselves and of the hand which invented them—and hence, of the imagination which conceived them.⁹⁷ In this way, the *grotesche* become expressions of the peculiar talent of the artist, whose advertisement of fast execution implies the rapid transcription of fleeting, imagined forms in the mind, an attitude echoed by Lomazzo's insistence on the *furor* and *bizzaria* requisite to grotesque decoration (*Trattato* VI.49).⁹⁸

The Innovations of Giovanni da Udine: Introductory Comments

Thus far, the Renaissance *grotesche* have generally appeared as or imitating relief or inlay of various kinds.⁹⁹ They are related to triumphal modes of

95 Luchinat, "Grottesca", 173. Sandström, *Levels*, 165, says that Signorelli's *grotesche* show "an unredeemed life latent in matter".

96 Hall, *Colour and Meaning*, 95.

97 Like Mantegna, Signorelli also paints figures in clouds, in the *Curucifixion with Saints* (1505–7, Pinacoteca Comunale, Borgo Sansepolcro).

98 *Scritti* II, 369; cf. Gilio's "pittore poeta". Vasari repeatedly links the *grotesche* with *bizzarrie* and *capricci*, in discussion of Filippino Lippi (see n. 88), of the capricious and fantastic nature of Morto da Feltro (*Vite* IV, 517), and of Marco da Faenza, who executed grotesques in Palazzo Vecchio, as "fiero, risoluto e terribile, e massimamente nella prattica e maniera di far grotesche" (*Vite* VI, 151).

99 For *grotesche* in paintings of marquetry, see Ghirlandaio's *Birth of the Virgin*, Tornabuoni Chapel. These intarsia are argued to be proof of Ghirlandaio's knowledge—or author-

decoration, where an exiguous painted architecture, often in the form of an arch or pavilion, encrusted with precious 'objects', frames a history.¹⁰⁰ They are fantastic in form but present an illusion of verisimilitude in the material they imitate.

This illusion of decoration applied to a support fades in the second phase of *grottesche*, where the influence of the Domus Aurea and the stuccoes of the Colosseum predominate over allusions to relief or mosaic *fogliami*. This development is largely associated with Giovanni da Udine's recovery of antique-style stucco-work and his imitation of the rapid antique technique involving juxtaposition of light and shade which Pliny calls *compendiaria*—"impressionistic" or, following Dacos, "abridged".¹⁰¹ This transforms *grottesche* into a field of ornament rather than a hybrid framing decoration which conflated trophy, candelabra and peopled acanthus.¹⁰² The flickering chiaroscuro and the artificial cangiante colouring which appear in later *grottesche* inherit from simulated mosaic an allusion to optical effect as the eye traverses a complex ornamental frame.

Once the *grottesche* render the fleeting appearance of objects in light, they can contain a wider range of images, such as landscapes. Giovanni da Udine excelled in taxonomic renderings of generic trophies—birds, musical instruments, insects and the magnificent festoons and pergolas of the Loggia di Psiche in the Farnesina, of Raphael's Logge and the first Vatican Logge.¹⁰³

ship—of Codex Escorialensis; see Dacos, "Ghirlandaio et l'antique", 430; Christel and Gunther Thiem, "Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini und die Groteskdekoration der florentiner Hochrenaissance", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 24 (1961), 19. The Cambio and Araldi's decorations in the Camera di San Paolo, Parma have white *grottesche* on a dark blue ground, suggestive of antique cameo; the same colours appear frequently on majolica *grottesche*.

100 For the triumph itself as fantasy, see the mid-century *Trionfi* engraved by Cornelius Bos (Rijksmuseum) showing strapwork chariots with satyrs, females with mask-like heads and *barbagianni*.

101 Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 34–35, sees Giovanni as blending this sketchy antique style with the tonal painting learnt in his period working under Giorgione. See idem, *Découverte*, 53, on colour as permitting rapid and undefined transitions from animal to vegetal features, compared to relief and grisaille.

102 See Dacos and Furlan, *Giovanni da Udine*.

103 The lower storey or "first Logge", decorated by Giovanni da Udine after Raphael's death has a sequence of naturalistic pergolas which influenced subsequent pergola decorations, as in the portico of Villa Giulia (Pietro Venale, c. 1550–55). See Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 101–7; Morel, *Le Parnasse astrologique: les décors peints pour le cardinal Ferdinand de Médicis: étude iconologique*. (Rome: Académie de France à Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1991), 53–63, on pergola ornament from the first Logge to the works of Tempesta



FIGURE 11.18 *Follower of Giovanni da Udine, early-mid 16th century. Fresco fragment with female head framed by a pattern of ribbons.*

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He thus suggested the complementarity of encyclopaedic depictions, painted with proto-scientific verism, with the sketchy ornamental manner which alludes to the fantastic, all-embracing and all-transforming nature of the

(Caprarola, 1580–81), Jacopo Zucchi (pavilion of Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–77), Lorenzo Sabbatini (first storey of the Logge of Gregory XIII, Vatican, 1575), Bernardino Poccetti (Buontalenti's grotto, Boboli gardens, 1586–87), Paul Brill, Guido Reni and Agostino Tassi (Palazzo Rospigliosi-Pallavicini, Rome, 1611–14). Vasari, *Vite* v 455, claims that the elderly Giovanni da Udine returned after 1559 to decorate the upper Logge ("Logge of Pius IV") which has maps on the walls, with academic and frigid grotesques in the vaults; see Furlan, *Giovanni da Udine*, 212–23.



FIGURE 11.19 *Giovanni da Udine, festoons and animal painting, Loggia di Psiche, Villa Farnesina, Rome, 1517–18.*

COURTESY ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DEI LINCEI.

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artist's invention.¹⁰⁴ Thus conceived, the *grotesche* are not only a mode of invention, but of representation—they show not only the combinations of the fantasy but the 'light' in which it reveals forms.

Giovanni da Udine also changed the disposition of the *grotesche* from panels of candelabra decoration to planes of flat colour, often left white, thus encouraging their movement from a frame to a decorative field. The assertion of the *grotesche* as displays of the artist's fantastic invention thereby becomes more pronounced. The illusion of rampant growth in the *grotesche* as they extend to cover vaults and walls is also a product of their plant-like, specifically vine-like, character—Scamozzi calls them "vine paintings" (*pitture di viti*).¹⁰⁵ This vine-like character, accentuated in their tendril-like spiralling calligraphic

104 See Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 15–18, 40, on Giovanni's perspective of musical instruments in Raphael's *St Cecilia* (1515) and the influence of a Flemish miniaturist, identified as Jan Ruysch, who Vasari says taught Giovanni how to paint plants (*Vite* v, 447–48).

105 Scamozzi, *Idea*, 111.24.

lines, in turn promotes the association with caprice, licentiousness, delirium and dream so prominent in writings on the *grottesche*. In such deployment, the generation of forms in the artist's imagination goes together with the treatment of the space they fill as an empty field filled by the activity of the artist's fantasy. The liveliness of the grotesques can be read as the penetration of notions of *energeia* into the abstraction of pattern, rendering the arabesque as a configuration of metamorphic forms which exhibit the torsions and *linea serpentinata* praised in Cinquecento art treatises.

To summarise, with their prolific capacity for extension and their serpentine lines, the *grottesche* show growth as a continuous principle of generation rather than as a process of actualisation, depicting change without end or meaningful narrative progression. They transform the traditional role of decorative pattern by showing how the artist's "fantastic" or "sophistic" skill transforms an inert field into a décor. They thematise the ever-present tensions held in pattern between form and formlessness, order and chaos, but render these profound oppositions in fabulous terms, at the level of artistic invention. Thus the emergence of form and the questions of framing or boundary held in ornament are figured openly in the *grottesche* but as the play of the artist's fancy. They show explicitly a content which had been carried implicitly and figuratively, making this content the subject of the artist's ingenious inventions. In so doing, they are a means by which ornament turns into decorative style applied to a field; their animation shows lively grace as a quality of style suffused throughout a space.

This endows the *grottesche* with a double character: they become both a decorative mode with licence to isolate and transform objects into motifs and a way of rendering all things that can be painted as a kind of meta-painting. Their fantastic character and their standardisation of applied ornament work together. We see this in Lomazzo's comment that all things which can be represented and imagined are conceded to the *grottesche* alone as their repertoire, while he simultaneously stresses their enigmatic or 'hieroglyphic' character (*Trattato* VI.49).¹⁰⁶ These characteristics work alongside the rhetorical naturalism of affective history painting.

Giovanni da Udine's innovations were to endure, with modification, throughout the sixteenth century. His recovery of *all'antica* stucco technique permitted a painted and relief composite, which replaced the fictive relief, mosaic and cameo of early schemes.¹⁰⁷ (see Chap 12, Fig. 2) As the surface to

106 Lomazzo, *Scritti*, II, 369.

107 See Vasari, *Vite* V, 449; Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 76; Armenini, *Precetti*, 221, says that Giovanni da Udine's recovery of antique stucco technique was attempted by "da'più

which they are 'affixed' disintegrates, the rendering of objects in the *grotesche* shifts; they seem more fragile, unstable and thus illusory, or subject to transformation as one object casually 'produces' another.¹⁰⁸ Where mosaic suggests the control of an overall design, the rendering of the *grotesche* as suspended or generative forms points to the random or uncontrollable character of the combinatory imagination, and here the likening of the *grotesche* to chimeras and 'insogni' becomes resonant. Painted as forms suspended against a white background, the grotesques suggest that the 'view through a window' of perspective framed by candelabra strips is replaced by a blank, uncertain field which is not without extension since things 'hang' within it.

The extension of this field, and the lighting of the *grotesche* becomes a matter of play, with objects presented variously as pendant, floating or collaged.¹⁰⁹ The background to the *grotesche* envisaged as a field of light or an airy space where de-contextualised, dematerialised forms float again points back to the fantasy and its associations with light, air and the 'storage' of images. Vasari refers to grotesques as "cose in aria", and the role of suspension or vertiginous balance in empty space becomes more pronounced in *grotesche* from the mid-decades of the Cinquecento.

We have suggested that in the *grotesche* ornament becomes a secondary realm of figuration, whose special quality concerns the ways in which the figure is treated rather than what it represents. Ornament shows a universal range of forms, subject to certain rules of visual arrangement (e.g. miniaturisation, fragmentation) and metamorphosis. The *grotesche* also provided a historically unified image of antique style ornament as described in the Leo x letter; deployed on monumental architecture they became a universal mode of decoration, embracing relief, painting and perspective. This universal ornament is complementary to the universal illusion of painting founded on the mastery of antique style.

sostituti cervelli, che fossero in Roma". Feigenbaum, *Display*, 19, calls stucco "the connective tissue of display".

108 The change appears in other media, although to a lesser degree; in ceramics the ground is in any case a field of colour with little illusion of depth. Stained glass *grotesche* tend to be of the pendant, "airy" variety, as delicate forms hanging against light by delicate threads.

109 For *grotesche* which appear to 'float' in their space, see Salviati's Chapel of the Margrave of Brandenburg, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome (completed 1550) and his decorations in the Sala di Apollo of the Salviati Apartment of the Palazzo of Domenico della Rovere (c. 1534–40); for unlit collaged forms, see Ridolfo di Ghirlandaio's *grotesche* in the Camera Verde, Palazzo Vecchio (1542).

The *Grottesche* Part 2. Signs, Topography and the Dream of Painting

Grotesque Decorations in the Workshop of Raphael

In the grotesque decorations executed by Giovanni da Udine under Raphael, the rendering of light, suspension and growth is given a topographical orientation of some importance for the subsequent articulation of architectural decoration. These decorations appear in pensile architecture and play on the dual nature of the *grottesche* as chthonic and ethereal.¹ Their three major experiments are however quite distinct in character, each working with a particular aspect or potential of the decoration. The *Stufetta* of Cardinal Bibbiena (1516) reproduces the vault compartments of the Volta Dorata and the *aediculae* of the Domus Aurea; with its red, black and gold grounds and its imitation of ancient encaustic, it comes closest to a recreation of an ancient painted room.² The Loggetta of Cardinal Bibbiena (1516) is a playful paradox—a subterranean cryptoporticus transformed into a loggia hanging in the light, peopled with the nocturnal creatures may allude to the animals and insects which infested the grottoes, commemorated in the comic rhyme about early explorations of the Domus Aurea.³ Dacos links the punning details of the decoration, where

1 Giovanni da Udine produced more conservative imitations of the vaults of the Domus Aurea, such as his work with Perino del Vaga in the Sala dei Pontifici, 1521, similar to Volta dorata as shown in the drawing of Francisco de Holanda.

2 The Stufetta was rediscovered in the nineteenth century, the Loggetta in the twentieth. See Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 31–32; *Giovanni da Udine*, 35–43; idem “La Loggetta du Cardinal Bibbiena: Décor à l’antique et rôle de l’atelier”, in *Raffaello a Roma*, 225–36; D. Redig de Campos, “Una Loggetta di Raffaello ritrovata in Vaticano”, in idem, *Raffaello e Michelangelo. Studi di storia dell’arte* (Rome: Bardi, 1946), 29–59. The programme, mostly with erotic scenes, was devised by Bibbiena, as noted in Bembo’s letter to him of 19 April, 1516. The lunettes depict barber’s scenes without antique precedent where river gods have their hair washed and trimmed; see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 39. The motif of putti racing chariots in the lower register of the decoration is taken from the Maritime Theatre of the Hadrian’s Villa; see *ibid.*, 40.

3 *Antiquarie prospettiche romane composte per prospettiva Melanese depictore*, c. 1500, describes the artists who descend the grottoes with picnics and, “piu bizzarri alle grottesche”, crawl along the passages with toads, frogs, owls and bats. See Antonio M. Adorisio, “Un enigma romano. Sulle *Antiquarie Prospettiche Romane* e il loro autore”, in *Roma nella svolta*, 464–80; Dacos, *Découverte*, 9–10. On the various hands in the Loggetta, see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*,

potbellied old men stand on delicate stems and cupids carry poles to keep their balance, with Bibbiena's delight in comedy, and Leo x's letter on the "joy and rejoicing" of Bibbiena's residence.⁴

The combination of brilliant ground and the insect-like delicacy of the forms plays with the duality of darkness and light associated with renovation of antiquity, its layered temporality concerning splendour or illumination and obscurity or decay. The delicate grotesques against their brilliant white background suggest nocturnal forms as though dissolved by the white light in which they hang.⁵

The Loggetta displays the coincidence between the chthonic and the effulgent, monstrosity and delicacy; this display also usurps the place of dramatic illusion. The pendant character of the dainty chimeras mirrors the pensile architecture of the loggia and their volatile, fugitive nature is echoed in the proliferation of frames so that the search for an organising central frame constantly moves from one area to another.

In place of an ornament that frames and 'discovers' an illusionistic history, here a series of analogies are created between figuration, disposition and architectural situation. These analogies provide the framework for a miscellany of images, including ancient cameos or plaques, *stemma* and animals from the menagerie of Leo x. Full size *trompe d'oeil* painted statues in niches punctuate the corridor, denoting the Loggetta as a sculpture gallery. Dominating the framework and its content is the reference to the fantasy which invents, combines and orders the metamorphic figurations that hang like a veil of metaphor over a field of light.

The Vatican Logge are, as Dacos observed, less experimental, as they return to the candelabra disposition of the *grottesche* as pilasters framing vistas—painted and real gardens in what is now the Cortile di San Damaso.⁶ The

55–60; she limits Raphael's role to the cornice framing the tempietti where grisaille 'statues' stand in fictive niches.

4 Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 34, n. 30; Mario Salmi, "Bernardo Dovizi e l'arte", *Rinascimento* 9 (1969), 3–50. On the absence of a programme, see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 44.

5 On this aspect of the *grottesche*, see Carl, "Ornament and Time", 53: "it is as if the resources of the chthonic were immolated in light, and the effort to recover an orientation to origins has produced its opposite".

6 Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 37. See idem, *Logge* (1977), for numbering, description of the articulation of the scheme and photographic documentation, engravings and sources; *Logge* (2008), 12, 22, pl. 13. On the architecture of the Logge and Cortile di San Damaso, see Frommel in *Raffaello architetto*, 357–78; Ackerman, *Belvedere*, 54, notes confusion in sixteenth century descriptions between the Logge and the lower part of the Belvedere Cortile, both of which shared a three storey portico. The garden appears in van Heemskerck's view of c. 1535–36 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna).



FIGURE 12.1 *Raphael and Giovanni da Udine, Loggetta of Cardinal Bibiena, 1516. Vatican.*
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festoons which frame the *aediculae* of the painted windows are superb still lifes of quasi-scientific detail but also derived from the sculpted festoons of Roman funerary altars; the copying of antiquity ‘enlivens’ it.⁷ The Logge also

⁷ A watercolour attributed to Armenini (Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, repr. in *Precetti*, ed. Gorreri, pls 1–v) shows the once vivid appearance of the painted garden scenes. Armenini discusses the copies of the Logge decoration executed by him for Fugger in Antwerp and for Philip II in *Precetti*, 205–6; see Bernice Davidson, “The Landscapes of the Vatican Logge from the Reign of Pope Julius III”, *Art Bulletin* 65, 4 (1983), 587–602.



FIGURE 12.2 *Raphael and workshop, Vatican Logge, 1518–19.*
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echoed Pinturicchio's loggia in the Belvedere villa, where pilasters with *grottesche* framed bouquets of fruit and idyllic landscapes with flying birds.⁸

The Logge creates a monumental arcade with illusory openings in its walls and its vault.⁹ The vault shows biblical scenes which commence with creation and culminate with the life of Jesus, with Joseph as *typus Christi* in the seventh, central arch of thirteen.¹⁰ The scheme is both progressive, from creation to redemption, and concentric, as the decoration of vaults one and thirteen, two and twelve, three and eleven *etc.* is balanced, but not identical.

The biblical scenes are framed by alternating architectural perspectives and *grottesche*, those in vaults six and eight painted as a *velarium*.¹¹ The illusionistic counterpart to *grottesche* is provided by scenographic architecture—sharply foreshortened colonnades and piers open to the heavens. Kemp discusses these vistas as typifying a decorative use of perspective which ‘dissolves’ rooms into dizzying pavilions from which audaciously foreshortened figures look down on the spectator, reaching its extreme point with Pellegrino Tibaldi's decorations in the Sala di Ulisse, Palazzo Poggi, Bologna, c. 1550–51.¹² Again the *grottesche* appear with allusions to light and air, alongside fragmentary scenographic elements. In the perspectives in vaults three, five, nine and eleven the biblical images are depicted as *quadri riportati*, behind which the architecture continues, inverting the relationship of *istoria* and its architectural frame. This play of elements, with each frame blocked by another will develop in the Sala di Costantino and is taken to its extreme point by Salviati. Rather than mediating the scene to the viewer, the architectural frame becomes a backdrop.

The Logge concentrate the relation of ornament and perspective into the tightest compass. The suspended *tempietti* and pavilions of the grotesque candelabra, hanging between nature and scripture, figure in miniature the

8 See Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 37; Cavallaro and Aurigemma, *Il Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere*, 185–86.

9 On Raphael's modifications to Bramante's design in the third storey of the Logge, and the use of the Tabularium as a model for their vaulting, see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 61.

10 On the artists involved in the biblical scenes to Raphael's designs, overseen by Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni, see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 66–67; see *idem*, *Logge* (2008), 8–10 for the eight artists she identifies in the Logge.

11 The central vault, decorated with gilded stucco, imitates the *Borghese Dancers*, the Hellenistic relief with dancing nymphs (Louvre). See Bernice Davidson, *Raphael's Bible: A Study of the Vatican Logge* (University Park PA: College Art Association, 1985); *idem*, “Raphael's Bible; an introduction”, in *Raffaello a Roma*, 217–23, for comparison to encyclopaedic biblical concordances and illuminated bibles.

12 Kemp, *Science of Art*, 70–72. See Rohlmann, *Italian Frescoes*, 370–85.

architettura pensile of the Logge, 'opened' to heaven and overlooking a garden.¹³ Within this pendant framework, all things, all variety that human artifice can imitate find their depiction, and this was extolled by sixteenth century commentators such as Vasari and Armenini who praise the Logge for their *varietà universale* or as an *esempio universale*.¹⁴ The grotesques of the Logge feature prominently in the sketchbook of Girolamo da Carpi, appearing alongside antiquities and ornamental designs.¹⁵ Zuccari in *L'idea* II.4 extols the Logge and Villa Madama as exemplars of *disegno esterno artificiale fantastico*, alongside the Stanze and Sala Regia of the Vatican, Taddeo Zuccari at Caprarola, Salviati in the Palazzo Farnese, Peruzzi's Sala della Prospettiva at the Farnesina and the Sistine vault.¹⁶ For Gilio, the Logge, like the Farnesina and Villa Giulia exemplify "poetic" painting where the painter works as a poet, painting as his "capriccio" dictates.¹⁷ He praised them for their "regolata varietà", despite his hostility to the *favoloso* (forms that cannot be), on the slender argument that the Logge do not violate nature by showing prodigies—a view based on superficial examination of the apparent naturalism of ornamental vegetation.¹⁸ The Logge also showed the kind of poetic licence approved by Gilio—species and habitats, including ornamental *finzioni* such as pergolas in a vault or trophies, ivy and vines on walls and columns, which do not flout the possibilities of verisimilitude.¹⁹

The *grottesche* as comprehensive gallery of antique art were matched by the use of Logge to display antiquities, notably a Dea natura statue, who is painted on Pilasters VI and X.²⁰ In Federico Zuccari's portrait of Raphael in the pose

13 Davidson, "Raphael's Bible", 222–23 lists biblical themes in the stucco grotesques; these include Lot's wife as a pillar of salt (Bay 4) and the Creation of Adam (Bay 13).

14 Armenini (*Precetti* III.9, 205) paraphrases Vasari's praise for depiction of all plant and animal species which nature produces in all parts of the world in all the seasons of the year (Vasari, *Vite* v, 449–50). Cf. Vasari's praise for the festoons of the Loggia di Psiche in the Farnesina, *ibid.*, 452, which show all that nature produces in Italy. The pilasters of the Logge were engraved by Giovanni Volpato, in a project initiated in 1760 and concluded only in 1777; see Dacos, *Logge* (1977).

15 See Canedy, *The Roman sketchbook of Girolamo da Carpi*. London: Warburg Institute, 1976. Canedy notes that the sketches were copied from drawings, not sculptures, and dates the book to c. 1549–53.

16 Zuccari, *L'idea*, 88.

17 Gilio, *Dialogo*, 15.

18 *Ibid.*, 19.

19 *Ibid.*, 19, 21. "Monsters" are excluded, except as illustrations of nature's prodigies.

20 On the statue's identity or source, in the Dea natura in the de' Rossi collections, see Christian, "De' Rossi Collection", 142–43, 154–58. An allusion to the Dea natura of Pilaster

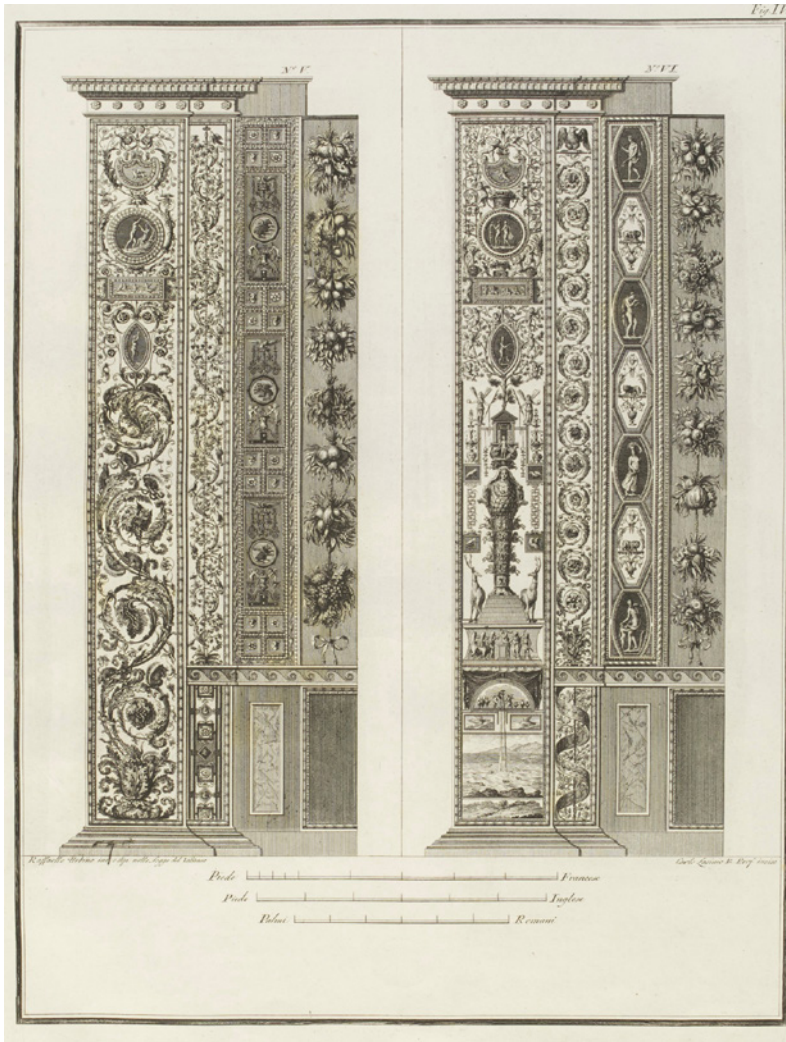


FIGURE 12.3 *Vatican Logge, Pilaster V and VI, from print series by Carlo Lasinio (1759–1838).*

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VI appears in Falconetto's Sala dei mesi, Mantua (c. 1520). The Dea natura also appears in the Loggetta; see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 58–59. On the display of the Dea in the 1520 Festa di Agone, see Chapter 8. On the display of sculptures acquired by Leo X and Julius II in the Logge, see Marcantonio Michiel, *Diarii* of December 27, 1519, in Golzio, *Raffaello*, 104; Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 15. Amongst the antiquities copied are a peopled acanthus relief (Uffizi) from the collections of the Della Valle and of Ferdinando de' Medici at Villa Medici, Rome (pilaster IX) and the peopled acanthus palmette, Vatican grottoes, formerly

of Raphael's *Isaiah*, he holds a sketch of the Dea natura, and the seventeenth century medal of Raphael has Diana of Ephesus on the verso.²¹

The repeated appearance of Dea natura leads us to the Logge as a kind of hexaemeral decoration, with their depiction of an ascent from nature to logos, including images of exotic flora and fauna, like new discoveries from the Americas.²² The Logge are a privileged habitat, a sacred gallery between earth and heaven where nature blossoms and art is represented universally in miniaturised form; the 'opening' to heaven and the disclosure of nature below are thus essential to its character. The appearance of the Dea natura, figure for *natura naturans*, suggests that art imitates nature's processes as much as its forms; the *grottesche* take over and modify the role of traditional hexaemeral ornament, as they figure the imaginative process by which things are apprehended.²³

The Logge as *thesaurus antiquitatis* likewise chart possibilities of selection and transformation.²⁴ As we have suggested, in the *grottesche* transformation of images is both psychological (concerning the role of the fantasy) and cultural (assimilation of antiquity). Dacos' studies of the Logge reveals the variety of the ancient sources (coins, gems, sarcophagi, relief) as well as references in the biblical scenes of the vault, quotations of contemporary art (Sistine Chapel, *Battle of Cascina*) and playful allusions to the Logge themselves (external lateral face of Pilaster 11a; external lateral face of Pilaster va).²⁵ Medici *stemma* and papal portraiture also appear, and the former majolica floor tiling created a decorative field from isolated images in geometric compartments. The stucco decorations present a taxonomy of single figural components which could be used as motifs, like nymph figures, or combined into larger scenes, showing various figures with varied postures and instruments such as urns or altars. Dacos has shown that many were isolated from reliefs, including

in the Chapel of John VIII, Old St Peter's (exterior pilaster Vb). See Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 44; Cecchi and Gasparri, *Villa Médicis IV: Le collezioni del cardinal Ferdinando*, 25–28.

21 See Christian, "De' Rossi Collection", 156–57.

22 Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 44, notes that Pilaster VII shows birds from the Americas which Giovanni da Udine could have seen stuffed, in the 1514 delegation of Manuel of Portugal.

23 The Dea natura appears amongst *grottesche* in Federico Zuccari's decorations in the vault of the Sala della nobiltà at the Villa D'Este at Tivoli.

24 The alteration of scale and detail is particularly evident in the stucco decorations. On the exploitation of miniature images such as coins, see Dacos, "Ghirlandaio et l'antique"; on Pinturicchio as miniaturist, see idem, *Découverte*, 63.

25 Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 76–88, discusses the sources of the stucco reliefs. Allusions to cameo are often emphasised by the dark blue ground behind stucco figures. In vault 10, *grottesche* are painted on fictive white mosaic; Dacos, *Logge* (2008) gives the artist as Luca Penni.

Centauromachies, Amazonomachies, the Borghese Dancers and Dionysiac scenes, such as the visit of the *thiasos* to a poet, in the Maffei collection.²⁶ The variety created in history painting by a grouping of figures in different postures, with diverse attributes, dress, age and sex is compartmentalised in the Logge into single stucco figures. The painted decorations add variety of colour, with fantastic transformations (e.g. coloured swans, creatures with green faces).

To this extent the Logge become something like a morphology of pictorial ornament, exploring conditions of transformation, metamorphosis and substitution. They show that any image can be dislocated from a history and used ornamentally as a motif.²⁷ In this sense, the Logge take on the role of a pattern book which plays with the permutations derived from combinations of components and changes of colour, material and other accidentals. The play remains lively due to the animating presence of the combinatory imagination, with its unending accidental permutations.

This variety is contained by the organisation of the pilaster decoration into four stucco frames on each pilaster face, in the sequence Amazon shield, circle, rectangle and lozenge.²⁸ This articulation, with stucco and painted ornaments in a vertical series of frames, has immense influence, particularly in Cinquecento and Seicento church decorations, where the connecting painted *grotesche* are generally replaced by gilded stucco on a white ground.²⁹

As noted, the painted grotesques of the pilasters at some points follow a 'concentric' organisation, so that Pilasters I and XIII, V and IX, IV and X bear similarities, according to the engravings of Volpato. The painted *grotesche* in places show taxonomies, in the trophies of fish and musical instruments

26 The dancing fauns and drunken Dionysus are quoted in intrados IVA, XIA, VIIC; see Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 60, 66, pls. 39, 40, 191. On the 'Icarius' relief in the Renaissance, see Barkan, *Unearthing*, 170–72, who reproduces the drawings after the relief by Aspertini (Codex Wolfegg, fols. 46v–47) and Falconetto (Albertina, Vienna) where the 'poet' visited by Dionysus becomes a woman. Falconetto adds a Priapic herm, a satyr and a urinating Silenus.

27 Where narrative scenes appear, such as the sacrifice on Pilaster VI, they are reminiscent of antique cameos or small reliefs. Certain images, some derived from coins, prefigure emblematic *figurae*, with condensed scenes; the sleeping nymph revealed by satyrs, as depicted in the *Hypnerotomachia*, appears repeatedly, at XIII and V B/VI A.

28 The circle, rectangle and mandorla were copied from the Volta Nera of the Domus Aurea, the Amazon shield from the Volta della Civetta. See Dacos, *Logge* (2008), 48.

29 Examples are too numerous to list; see for example the decoration of the chapels of Santa Maria di Loreto, Rome, by artists including Nicolò Circignani, dating from the late Cinquecento or the 1627 gilded stucco decoration of the High Altar, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.

in the external lateral pilasters XIB–XIIA and VIIB–VIII A, while the pilasters of the central arcade of the Logge, at VII, show the most naturalistic scene, with the stucco vignettes applied to an oak branch with birds, carried by a kneeling rustic figure, suggestive of Romulus' invention of the trophy.³⁰ Another naturalistically painted bird trophy appears at Pilaster XI, where however the branch carrying the birds changes species with each different bird. Taxonomies painted with proto-scientific accuracy appear alongside the fantastic encyclopaedism of the grotesques.³¹

The varied botanic settings of Pilaster XI recalls an important aspect of grotesque decoration—the depiction of a miniature locus for each thing represented, whether a tempietto, drape or festoon, or a motif, like palmette, volute or calyx. Conversely, figures which we might expect to find within a locus motif are often displaced outside of it, becoming subject to visual conventions of framing, such as symmetrical doubling or the attenuation of line which turns extremities into phytomorph arabesques. The vertiginous character of the *grotesche* manifests itself through the multiplication of locus motifs, with the consequent expansion and re-alignment of frames; the breakdown of framing and framed plays into regress. The Logge, like other grotesque decorations executed under Raphael's direction, pay careful attention to the containing role of the architectural framework, which forms a decisive limit for the scheme while stressing openness. In later *grotesche*, the grotesques swarm over vaults which appear cavernous as the enclosing structure does nothing to contain the regress of mediation.

The question of the figurative meaning in the *grotesche* and the question of their deployment belong together. Their drive to form figures almost suggests some kind of divulgatory energy, but these fields of play, which simultaneously cultivate an artifice of chaos and expunge the materiality of the background of forms, return us to the question of a setting for an artifice that displays the mind's absorption of its objects. This brings us to the final stage of topographical 'disclosure' in Raphael's *grotesche* decorations.

30 There are frequent trophy allusions in the small stucco decorations, as at Pilaster VIB/VIIA.

31 On *grotesche*, collecting and scientific illustration, see Morel, *Grotesques*, 63–83; idem, *Le parnasse astrologique*, 59–60, on the *grotesche* executed by Bachiacca for the scrittoio of Cosimo I in Palazzo Vecchio, which contained animals and plants painted with quasi-scientific accuracy. Zoological and monstrous images meet in late sixteenth century illuminations of Georg Hoefnagel, whose arrangement of miniature objects and cancellation of naturalistic scale recall *grotesche*; see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The School of Prague: Painting at the Court of Rudolf II* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1988), 202–10.

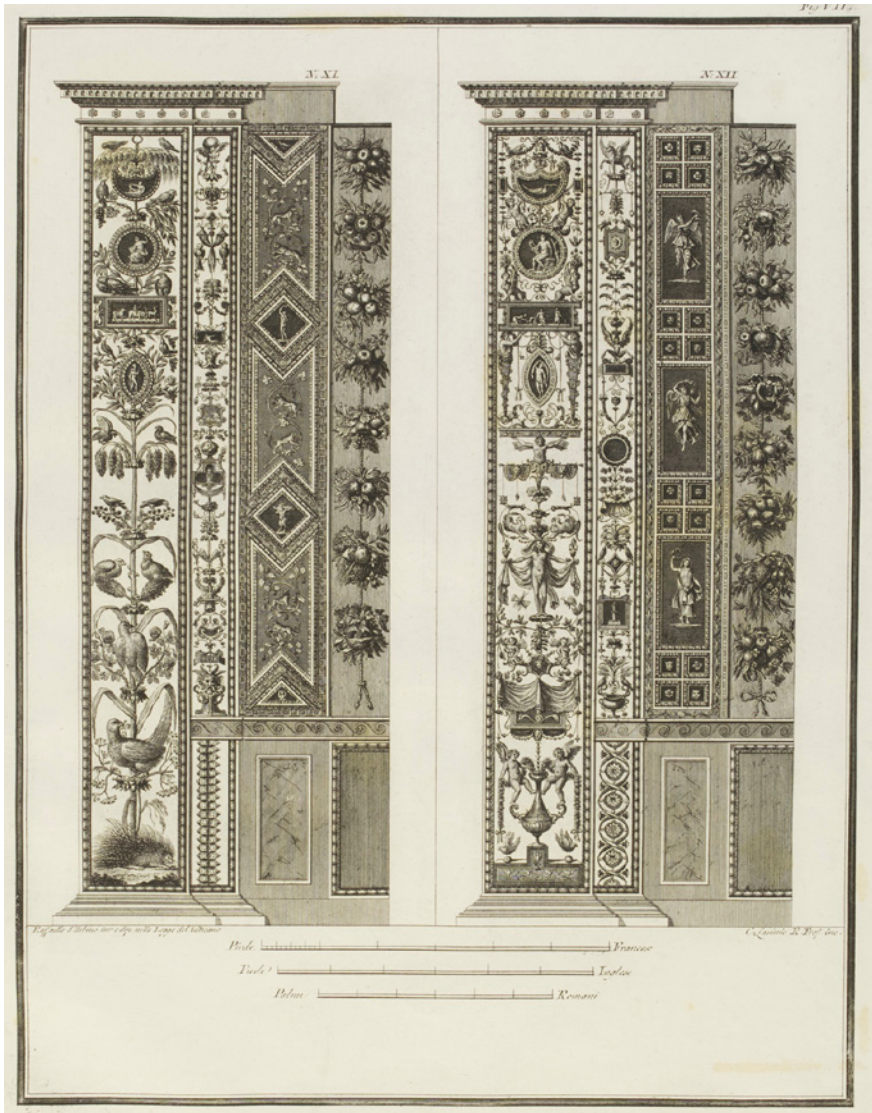


FIGURE 12.4 *Vatican Logge, Pilaster XI* from print series by Carlo Lasinio (1759–1838),
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON.

This appears in Villa Madama, where the extant loggia is decorated with *grotesche*. At first glance, the ornament of the loggia, carried out by Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine probably in accordance with Raphael's plans, proclaims itself as the recovery of antique ornament to perfect Bramante's recovery of antique structures in the "Leo x" letter. The ornament is at once

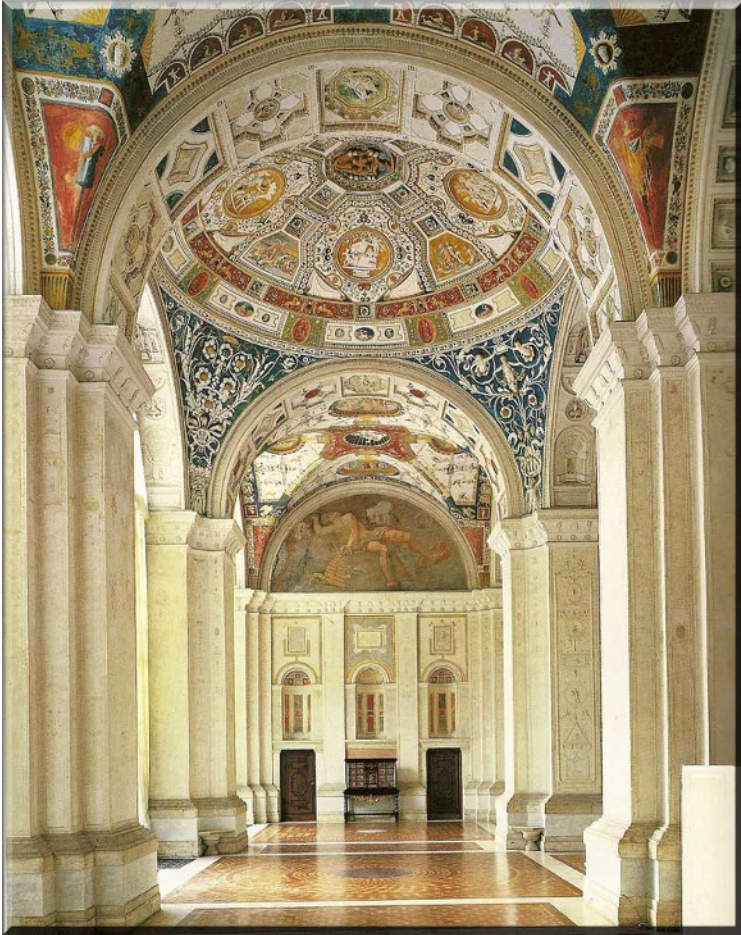


FIGURE 12.5 *Raphael, Giovanni da Udine and Giulio Romano, Loggia, Villa Madama, Rome, 1520.*

COURTESY CERIMONIALE DIPLOMATICO DELLO STATO,
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY. PHOTO: PUBLIC
DOMAIN, VIA WIKIPEDIA.

opulent and highly controlled (excluding the *Polyphemus* of Giulio Romano), and Serlio praises its harmonious variety and proportion.³² This impression of the harmony of space and decoration may lie partly in the use of ornamental

³² "l'ordine di questa loggia è bellissimo, il cielo de la quale è variato concordamente . . . tutte le cose sono proportionate a le proprie", Terzo Libro, (1619), 120v. Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 113, justly calls the *Polyphemus* a "provocation".

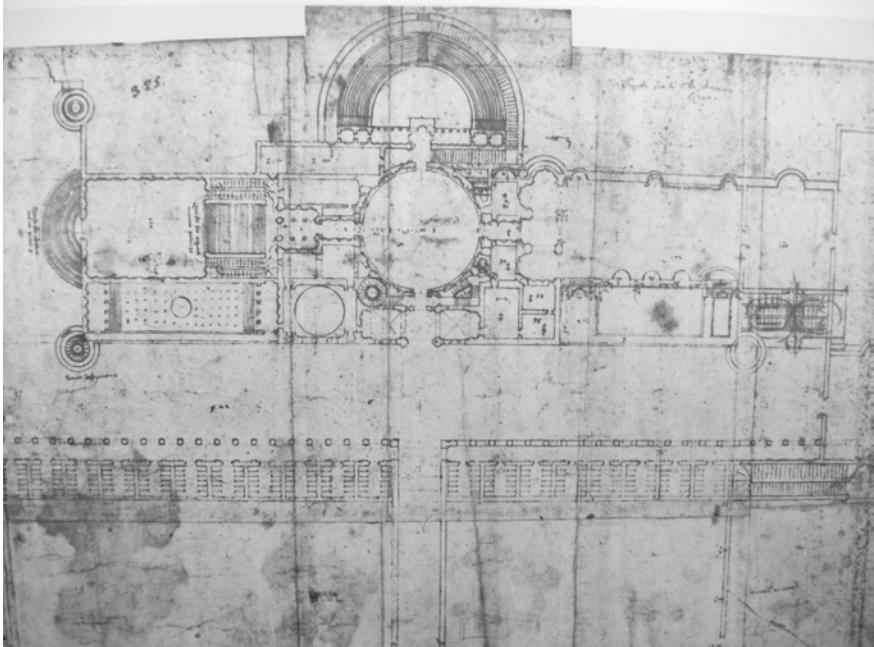


FIGURE 12.6 *Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Villa Madama, plan. Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, A 314.*

COURTESY MINISTERO DEI BENI E DELLE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA.

compartments, notably the Greek cross with a circle at its centre, which repeat shapes fundamental to the plan of the villa.³³

The plan is centred on the circular court from which wings project, giving a theatre carved into the hillside to the north, terraced garden and fishponds to the east, an entrance portico and apartments to the west and, to the south, apartments including a domed sala with grottoes beneath. The villa was conceived as a setting to articulate a continuum of courtly activities, described in the letter ascribed to Raphael and addressed to Castiglione.³⁴ The theatrical

33 See the two extant plans, Uffizi 273 A (Battista Da Sangallo) and Uffizi 314 A (Antonio Da Sangallo the Younger).

34 See Guy Dewez, *Villa Madama: a memoir relating to Raphael's project* (London: Lund Humphries, 1993); idem, in *Raffaello architetto*, 343–56; Frommel, “La villa Madama e la tipologia della villa nel Rinascimento”, *Bolletino Centro Internazionale di studio architetonici Andrea Palladio*, 11 (1969), 47–64; idem, *Raffaello architetto*, 311–41; Sabine Eiche, “A new look at three drawings for Villa Madama”, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen*

associations of the spaces were asserted through the reiteration of circular rooms, exedrae and of terracing. The great circular court which recalls the Pantheon with its four doorways, and alternation of columns and columnated window tabernacles, is echoed in the other circular and semi-circular forms throughout the planned villa—the round towers containing *diaeta* and chapel, the semi-circular theatre and niches in the logge, fountains and xystus, the domed roof of the great hall and the circular fountains planned for the enclosed garden and the loggia of the xystus.³⁵

If the ornamental disposition echoes the forms used in the planning, this suggests that the surface decoration becomes the outward display of concerns that run throughout. The abstract conception expressed through the relations of geometric forms at the level of the plan appears in sensuous terms in the full embodiment of form and colour for the eyes in the ornament. We are presented with a structure of analogies between decoration, topography and plan.

The decorative articulation of the loggia also changes in the progression from the central court to the xystus at the top of the terraced gardens. The loggia commences at the court end with a vestibule with coffered vault; as we move inwards the decoration becomes richer and more delicate, but remains white stucco, while the passage into the luminous space of the loggia proper is marked by a movement into brilliantly coloured ornament. From here one progresses into the open air and light at the uppermost level of the garden—early images, before the loggia was glazed, show the continuity with the garden with sculpture displayed in both spaces.³⁶ The terraced gardens with their exedrae and arcaded grottoes, decorated with grotesque mosaic and stucco, again extend the ornament of the loggia into the garden.

As we move towards nature, things take on richer colour, culminating in the xystus, framed by the great triple arch of the loggia. The loggia, at once grotto and luminous, pensile garden room epitomises the tension between belvedere and cavern embedded in the rock played out in the topography of the villa.³⁷ The terraced topography of the garden itself is in turn articulated, with the

Institutes in Florenz, 36 (1992), 275–86; Claudia Cieri Via, “Villa Madama: una residenza ‘solare’ per i Medici a Roma”, in *Roma nella svolta*, 349–74; Renato Lefebvre, *Villa Madama* (Roma: Editalia, 1973), who reproduces Antonio da Sangallo’s sketches for the gardens running to the Tiber.

35 See Uffizi 273 A and Uffizi 314 A, which shows the great circular court.

36 See the sketch by Marten van Heemskerck, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett 72 D2 24r.

37 Carl, “Ornament and Time”, 62, n. 115 notes, “the boundaries between exterior and interior are extremely ambiguous . . . the two extremes of grotto and belvedere are constantly in play at all levels”.

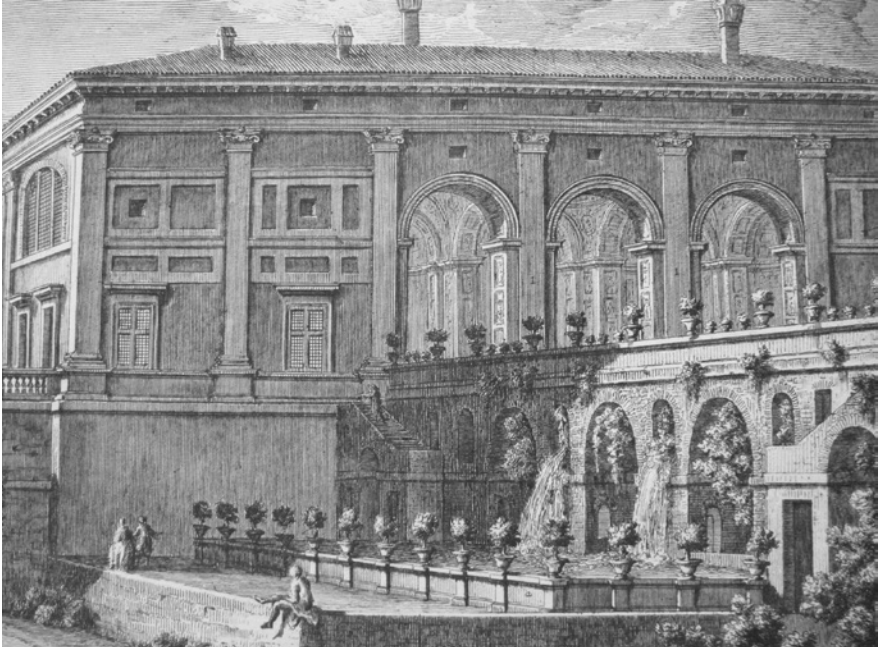


FIGURE 12.7 *Villa Madama. From Giuseppe Vasi, Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna Book X, 1760.*

COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN.

PHOTO: AUTHOR.

sunny xystus adorned with statues and fountains and the underlying fishpond with its dark grottoes recessed in the wall whose three great arches echo the loggia above.³⁸

The *grottesche* work at Villa Madama as the outermost level of a visual ordering which has achieved mastery of poetic meaning, and can move from vision to contemplation without a literary programme.³⁹ This movement reappears

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- 38 The niches of the fishpond are recessed into the back wall and joined by an ambulatory.
- 39 On the lack of a defined literary programme, see the letters of June 1520 between the builder Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, later Clement VII, to Bishop Mario Maffei. Giulio declared himself agreeable to images from Ovid but insisted that the decoration should be continuous, easily recognisable and varied, not obscure—and without the biblical references of the Logge: “siano distese et continuate et sopra tutto desidero che siano cose note . . . le cose di Ovidio di che Vostra Pa[terni]tà mi scrive, mi vanno a gusto . . . Cose oscure . . . non voglio, ma varie sì et scelte. Le cose del Testamento vecchio bastion alla loggia di Nostro Signore”. Maffei deplored the tension between Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine, “duo pazzi”, and the “molestia” of the project. See Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 111, 262, documents 4–5; she sees the conflict reflected in the uneven quality and style of the decorations.

on a reduced scale in Villa Lante on the Gianicolo, carried out by Giulio Romano shortly after Raphael's death, which reworks the duality of cavernous and luminous qualities in a hillside villa.⁴⁰ From the coloured decorations in the vault of the principal room we move into a loggia which combines the delicate pensile character of the Loggetta of Bibbiena and the brilliant white stucco *grotesche* of the Loggia at Villa Madama.

The grotesques are monumentalised in Villa Madama, placing them on a sequence of arches that recall Bramante's designs for the crossing of St Peter's or the *School of Athens*; this is accomplished without losing the creative tension between the generative chaos of the grotto, figured in the welter of metamorphosis, and the ethereal and delicate character of these forms hanging against the bright void of their background. This monumental treatment emphasises that the grotesques are made harmonious, their chaos turned to *varietas* by an ordering that is visual and formal rather than iconographic. Ligorio, like Serlio, saw the *grotesche* as creating a 'symphony' despite their 'dissonant' or 'assymphonic' appearance, "fanno una sinfonia, se bene pareno assinfoniche".⁴¹

The deployment of *grotesche* in Raphael's decorated architecture suggests that ornament works through a whole complex and topography, rather than appearing at certain key points of articulation. It mediates between plan and nature, which it frames and parallels, rather than framing iconographic disclosures for which the architecture provides a mere tectonic structure. This deepens the earlier deployment of *grotesche* painted as a series of pilasters supporting a bejewelled vault framing a perspectival history. Where decoration loses the tension and subtlety conspicuous at Villa Madama, it may become the mere accommodation of motifs to spaces. The *grotesche*, with their capacity to enlarge and modulate, are particularly suited to such accommodation. Once the *grotesche* are simplified and depopulated, they provide the lineaments of a decorative field in which ornament is without metaphoric significance or framing function, a beautiful yet inherently empty form of mediation between the beholder and the blankness of space.

Pirro Ligorio: The Concord of Correspondences

At Villa Madama, the model of ornament configured on a triumphal arch which discloses a vista does not disappear but is rendered subtle and complex as it is multiplied throughout the topographic planning. This approach to villa

40 See *ibid.*, 122, for attribution of decoration of the Salone to Polidoro da Caravaggio and Maturino, and the loggia stuccowork to Giovanni da Udine.

41 Ligorio, *Libro dell'antichità*, Turin 8, fol. 152r, repr. SAC III, 2670.

architecture, in which the role of the buildings as settings for recreation leads to elaborate analogies between contemplation as activity in a place and the speculative thought embodied in the design, reaches repletion with Ligorio's Casino of Pius IV in the Vatican.⁴² The villas attributed to Ligorio, the Casino and the Villa D'Este at Tivoli, set forth multiple iconographic narratives and archaeological associations in order to arrive at the full disclosure of art's analogy to nature and its setting in nature.⁴³ They test the limits of scenographic villa topography as a mode of organisation which confers intelligibility on the iconography which it contains and orders.

Ligorio shows *grottesche* as the counterpart to *spolia* decoration in their dense visual organisation and their capacity to exhibit multiple analogies. In the essay on *grottesche* in his encyclopaedia on antiquities, he attempts a semantics derived from traditional multi-level allegory, which sees them as signifying "the physical, the mystical and the mythological".⁴⁴ Ligorio reads the

42 The letter on Villa Madama (see n.34) employs classical terminology (*xystus*, *diaeta*) which stresses the aspiration to create a series of settings for cultivated leisure; in terms reminiscent of Castiglione, the addressee, the winter *diaeta* is called a place in which to "ragionare con gentilhomini".

43 On Ligorio, see David Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance artist, architect, and antiquarian with a checklist of drawings* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); Charles Mitchell and Erma Mandowsky, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: the Drawings in MS XIII B7 in the National Library in Naples* (London: Warburg Institute, 1963); Anna Schreurs, *Antikenbild und Kunstanschauungen des Pirro Ligorio (1513–1583)* (Cologne: Walther König, 2000); Robert Gaston ed., *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1988); Carmelo Occhipinti, *Pirro Ligorio e la storia cristiana di Roma (da Costantino all'Umanesimo)* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007). Wherever modern editions of Ligorio's manuscripts have been available, I provide references. For guidelines to manuscripts abbreviations, see Abbreviations.

44 "[i] tre sensi poetici, con la physica naturalmente, con la mistica e con la mitologica", *Libro* Turin 8, 153v, repr. SAC III, 2677–8 on Proteus, deity of the *grottesche*; cf. *Libro* Turin 23, fol. 82r, mod. ed. *Libri degli eroi e uomini illustri dell'antichità*, ed. Beatrice Venetucci (Rome: De Luca, 2005), 112: "l'immagine di Proteo . . . rappresent[a] la physica, et la mistica, o mitologica delle cose, et dela natura et dell'accidenti et antecedenti"; Turin 11, fol. 121r, on the use of "physical and mystical poetry to signify mythologically, with multiple meanings", "[la] physica et mistica poesia: per significare per più sensi mitologicamente"; *Trattato* (Treatise on the nobility of the arts), Turin 29, fol. 4v, repr. Schreurs, *Antikenbild*, 404, on "allegorical matter, which lies in the mythological and physical [levels] of poetry", "materia allegorica, che stesce nella mitologia e physica della poesia". On the *Trattato*, see Coffin, "Pirro Ligorio and the Nobility of the Arts", *JWCI* XXVII (1964), 191–210. On Ligorio's use of multi-level allegory, see Marcello Fagiolo, "Il significato dell'acqua e la dialettica del giardino. Pirro Ligorio e la 'filosofia' della villa cinquecentesca," in *Natura e artificio*, 177; Robert Gaston, "Pirro Ligorio's Roman fountains and the concept of the

images of creatures and things as “hieroglyphs” (i.e. visual metaphors based on similitude), the “deboli legami” as figures for our vacillating thoughts and desires and the metamorphic vegetal scrolls as a reference to prime matter, actualised in the succession of forms.⁴⁵

The *grottesche* provide an aggregative mode of display for antique fragments and a structure of meaning, which recalls hexaemeral allegory alongside reflections on the instability of the fantasy: “the interrupted desires in human thought... the fragile and weak foundations of our actions”.⁴⁶ Ligorio perceives the “symphonic” organisation of the *grottesche* as prevailing over their chaotic tendencies. Their complex organisation carries a nexus of allegorical (“hieroglyphic”) figures and exhibits the harmony in which antique art imitates its model, nature. (By contrast, Ligorio reviles contemporary Mannerist for its broken forms, contorted postures and fantastic ornament as “an asymphony, a discord of endless endings”.⁴⁷)

Ligorio extols *harmonia mundi* in the “consonance of created things” and the “concord of correspondences” in which they show their decorum; the second phrase connotes Ligorio’s cultivation of a densely analogical mode of figuration where all things are related due to their participation in harmony.⁴⁸ The “symphony and correspondences” of all created things is moved by the “alto e profondo musico”—divinely ordained nature as musician who creates consonance in the heavens and in every species, perfected by their variation in time.⁴⁹ Mediating between celestial and earthly music are the Muses, “united

antique: investigations of the ancient nymphaeum in Cinquecento antiquarian culture”, in *Patronage and Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Kathleen Christian and David Drogin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 223–49. Ligorio’s essay on the *grottesche* is reprinted in *Dacos, Découverte*, 161–82 and SAC III.

45 *Libro*, Turin 8, 153v, repr. SAC III, 2676.

46 “assimigliano alli interotti desiderij negli umani pensieri... vi siano dipinti i fragibili e deboli nostri fundamenti nelle nostri azzioni”. *Ibid.*, fol. 151v, 153r, repr. SAC III, 2666, 2675.

47 “‘una assinphonia, una discordia d’infinita desinentie’, *Trattato*, fol. 13r. See *Trattato*, *ibid.*, on the “michelangelastri”; on Ligorio’s use of Michelangelesque figures, see Caterina Volpi “Sciuratti, mattaccini e giocolieri: Pirro Ligorio, Michelangelo e la critica d’arte della controriforma”, in *Gli dei a corte*, ed. G. Venturi and F. Cappelletti (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 179–205.

48 “la consonantia delle cose create, che noi veggiamo, nelli semi, nelle frondi delle piante, nelle divisioni dei fiori et nella diversità delle arbori e dell’animali”, “la proprietà delle cose si mostrano obligate alla concordia delle corrispondenze”, *Trattato*, fol. 16r, Schreurs, 416.

49 “il creatore... in tutte le sue cose create con symphonia et corrispondenza di cose più perfette... vi ha posta una perfetta consonantia... esse cose mosse dall’alto, et profondo Musico, vengono a perficere da tempo in tempo variando mostrano la essentia loro et la consonantia e diletatione del suo signore”, Turin 11, fol. 170r; see Maria Luisa Madonna

and clear like a river”, whose chorus shows the consonance of the arts.⁵⁰ The harmony of creation whose concord is revealed to humans by the Muses is an old Platonic and Philonic theme; Ligorio weds it to the encyclopaedic project of recovering the fragmentary *memorie* of antiquity.⁵¹

This means that time, place and memory become significant and layered, reflecting the concord between thought and physical structures. The loci of the Muses are both the springs which they govern as nymphs, and the little place or *luocolo* of the mind.⁵² Ligorio describes Pierius, birthplace of the Muses, as the *habitatulo* of the mind and Helicon, where the Muses dance, as books.⁵³ The Muses are also ‘local’ in the sense that Ligorio translates intellectual, moral or aural conceptions of harmony into visual terms; “every consonant and well-proportioned place is called Muse”.⁵⁴ The local is associated with *memoria* as an antiquity or its depiction and in the notion of mnemonic organisation as a form of visual arrangement. Thus Ligorio states that the *musaea* at the Academy of Hadrian’s Villa as circular in form to represent the consonance of

and Marcello Fagiolo, “La Casina di Pio IV in Vaticano—Pirro Ligorio e l’architettura come geroglifico” *Storia dell’arte* 15–16 (1972), 257.

50 come un fiume unite et chiare si sentivano et si vedevano”, Turin 13, fol. 196r; see Madonna, ‘Il Genius Loci di Villa D’Este. Miti e misteri nel sistema di Pirro Ligorio’, in *Natura e Artificio*, 199.

51 On Ligorio’s forgeries, including the collaborative production of *falsi* to which he gave visual form, see Ginette Vagenheim, “La falsification chez Ligorio. À la lumière des *Fasti Capitolini* et les inscriptions de Préneste”, *Eutropia* 3 (1994), 67–113; idem, “Appunti per una prosopografia dell’“Accademia dello Sdegno” a Roma: Pirro Ligorio, Latino Latini, Ottavio Pantagato e altri”, *Studi umanistici piceni* 26 (2006), 211–226; idem, “La collaboration de Benedetto Egio aux Antichità romane de Pirro Ligorio: à propos des inscriptions grecques” in *Testi, immagini e filologia nel Cinquecento*, ed. Eliana Carrara and Silvia Ginzburg (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007), 205–224; Schreurs, *Antikenbild*, 33; Mitchell and Mandowsky, *Pirro Ligorio*, 50–51.

52 For the Muses as nymphs, see Turin 12, fol. 47v, “*Nymphas* is the name of the ancient goddess or so-called bride of fountains, or *lympharum*, thus the Graces and the Muses are called nymphs; ‘Nymphas ancora è nome dell’antica Dea de’ fonti, quasi lympharum, et sposa interpretata, onde nymphe dicono le Gratie et le Muse’. On the mind as ‘luocolo’, see *Trattato*, fol. 26v, “when we note things in drawing we pause, and in pausing we consider them and place them in the little locus of the memory”, “notando le [cose] nel disegno ci firmeremo, et firmandoci faremmo la consideratione et la locaremo nel luocolo della memoria”.

53 “[le Muse] si generano . . . in Pieria de Giove, cioè nell’habitatulo della mente . . . Così gli epositori Greci dichiarono Pieria esser habitatulo dell’intelletto stesso et Helicone esser i libri ne’ quali van ballando le Muse cio è le cognitioni”, Naples 3, fol. 27v; see Graham Smith, “The Stucco Decoration of the Casino of Pius IV” in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 37/2 (1974), 132.

54 “Musa si chiama ogni luogo bene consonante et proportionato”, Turin 11 fol. 169v.

times past, present and future as they are brought together in memory and the intellect.⁵⁵ The cosmic temporality of heavenly and earthly music, the historicity of antique *memorie* and the mind's processes of apprehension and recollection are all "consonant".

The figures who 'unfold' principles and mediate them, the Muses, Graces and Hōrai, provide the allegorical correspondences which have their visual analogy in the continuum of ornament. Ligorio's harmonic model lends itself to the rich cultivation of ornament which elaborates the visual 'intervals' that articulate a whole. This appears in his villas, which can be read as complementary essays in *grottesche* as organisational and symbolic mode, central to the achievement and imitation of ancient art. The compact, self-enclosed Casino of Pius IV, sanctuary to the Muses and the Hōrai, is indeed a repository of ornament. At the Villa D'Este the elaborate geometry of the garden, with its numerous gods in the ornate *loculi* of their fountains and the linking waterways and pathways dedicated to the metamorphosis and generative nature, suggests analogy with a vault of grotesque-work. In each case we find a stratified topography which corresponds to a tripartite allegory of physical, mythological and spiritual senses focused on the typology of water but the iconographic reflection moves away from the idyll of achieved harmony of the Casino to questions of toil, wandering, and destruction as the condition of transformation at Tivoli. Where poetry is an explicit theme at the Casino, at the Villa D'Este it forms a condition of meaning; only when viewed in terms of Ligorio's insistence on multi-level allegory do the multiple narratives come into focus.

The Casino of Pius IV, built c. 1558–63 as a summer house in a hillside grove behind the Belvedere court, works over three distinct levels.⁵⁶ These

55 "these temples were circular to represent the memory of things which are consonant and return like the heavens; [they were] harmoniously accommodated and represented in the intellect" "quali tempj erano rotondi per rappresentare la memoria delle cose che consonano et a guisa de cieli si rivolgano ... [erano] consonantemente conciliati et rappresentati nell'intelletto", Turin 11, fol. 172r. Ligorio also speaks of memory as "a certain union between all things past conjoined with those present and hidden in the future" ("una certa unione di tutte le cose passate congiunte colle presenti et le future nascose"), Turin 23, fol. 149r, mod. ed. *Libro degli eroi*, 168.

56 See W. Friedländer, *Das Kasino Pius des Vierten* (Leipzig: K.W. Hiersmann, 1912); Fagiolo and Madonna, "La Roma di Pio IV", *Arte Illustrata*, 51 (1972), 383–402 and 52 (1973), 186–212; idem, "La Casina di Pio IV"; idem, *La Casina di Pio IV in Vaticano* ed. Daria Borghese (Turin: Allemandi, 2010), 58–77; Smith, "Stucco Decoration"; idem, *The Casino of Pius IV* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Maria Losito, *Pirro Ligorio e il Casino di Paolo IV in Vaticano. L'«esempio» delle «cose passate»* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 2000); Gaston, "Pirro Ligorio, the Casino of Pius IV and Antiques for the Medici: some new Documents", *JWCI*, 47 (1984), 205–09.



FIGURE 12.8 *Pirro Ligorio, Casino of Pius IV, Vatican, 1559–62.*

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.

correspond to the “alto e profondo musico”, represented by the twin deities Apollo and Diana-Dea natura, and the sacred allegories embedded in lavish *grottesche* within the palazzina; the exterior concerns nature and antique gods, the interior holds the Christian *involucrum*.⁵⁷

At the lowest level is a nymphaeum, containing a statue of Cybele with *corona turrita* in a central niche and two lateral niches with reliefs of the Hōrai, formerly lanked by canephore Pans like the Della Valle satyrs.⁵⁸ This grotto, encircled by waters before the enclosing walls of the Casino, suggests reference to the secluded shrines and the ship sanctuaries of the *magna mater*—the

57 See Turin II, fol. 169r for Apollo’s “symphonic government” as “pastoral sun” and the “symphonic” creation of “ministering nature”; as in the *Saturnalia* and Lucian (*Dea Syria*) the Dea natura is often discussed as threefold, see *ibid.*, fols 121r, 135r, 168v; Naples 3 fols 71v, 75r, 22v.

58 On alterations to this level of the complex, see Losito, *Pirro Ligorio*, 33, 49, 55, 124 (fig. 11), 137 (fig. 42), 151–53, docs 56–63, 155–56, docs 70–73.

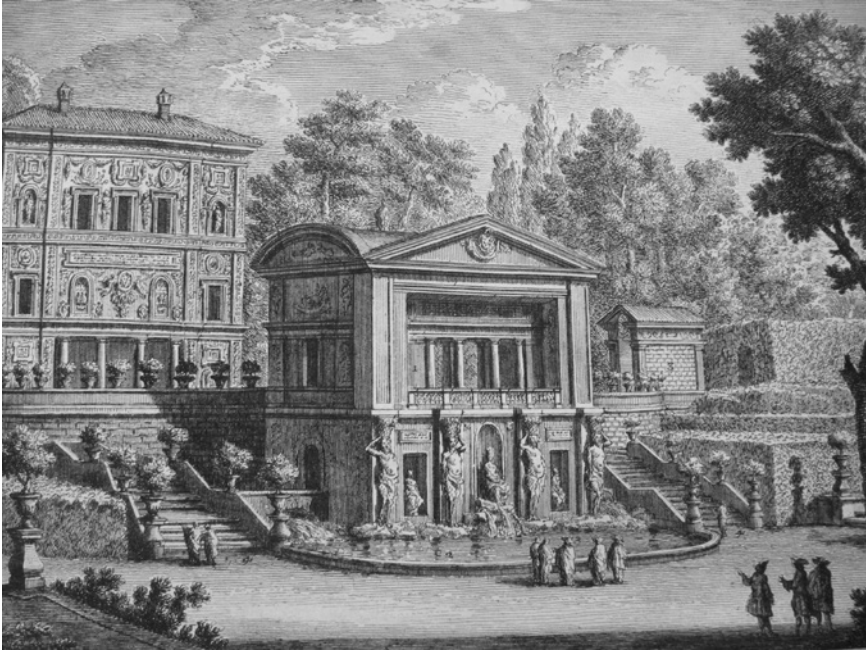


FIGURE 12.9 *Casino of Pius IV, Nymphaeum. From Giuseppe Vasi, Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna, Book X, 1760.*

COURTESY OF THE BOARD OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN.

PHOTO: AUTHOR.

ships of Isis or Cybele or the Nave nemorense at the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, which Ligorio described as containing sumptuous decorations and a central fountain, like the Casino.⁵⁹

At the second level an oval court is entered by two arches adorned with antique style mosaics and aquatic scenes in stucco; it refers to the *naumachia*, an artificial lake surrounded by buildings, and forms a nice inversion of the *nymphaeum* as a sequestered shrine to the *magna mater*.⁶⁰ This level is

59 On the Nave nemorense, see Turin 12, fols 58v, 65r; on the ships of Isis and Berecynthia-Cybele on the Isola Tiberina, see *ibid.* fols 70v–71r. The importance of Nemi reappears at the Villa D'Este in the theme of Hippolytus as Virbius and priest of Nemi.

60 The aquatic scenes show the Birth of Venus, Diana and Actaeon, the Rape of Deianeira and possibly Latona and the Lycian shepherds (south east gate); Perseus and Andromeda, the Rape of Europa, the Triumph of Galatea and the Triumph of Neptune (north west gate). The sides of the loggia show Amalthea suckling Jupiter and Aurora with Tithonus. Ligorio depicted *naumachiae* in Greek coins (Naples 1, fol. 406/278v) and in his great Roman map of 1561, *Antiquae urbis imago*. Ligorio, like Dupérac (1570), Cartaro (1579)



FIGURE 12.10 *Casino of Pius IV, loggia.*

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.

dominated by depictions of Apollo, the Muses and the Hōrai on the facades of the palazzina and the facing loggia. On the loggia two reliefs of the chorus of Muses flank a relief inscribed “Pierio”, showing a female figure with mask and urn, corresponding to Ligorio’s description of the personification of Aganippe or Helicon.⁶¹ The Muses reappear in the stucco decorations of the vault inside the loggia, where they alternate with images of the myth of Venus and Adonis.⁶² On the pediment Aurora flanked by Flora and Pomona appears within the zodiac, denoting Apollo’s planetary role.⁶³ A statue of Hygieia sur-

and Lauro (1612) designates the area of the Belvedere and Casino as the site of the villa of Lucius Rustius.

61 Naples 9, 15r.

62 On Venus as Dea natura with Adonis as a variant of Cybele with Attis or Isis with Osiris, see Turin 11, fol. 138v. Raffaele Borghini also identified the birth of Bacchus in the vault frescoes; see Smith, *Casino*, 76.

63 See Smith, *Casino*, 45, n. 55; Jules Bouchet and Raoul Rochette, *La Villa Pia des jardins de Vatican, architecture de Pirro Ligorio* (Paris: Carilian-Goeury et Dalmont, 1837), pl. 21.

mounts the pediment, referring to *salus* as the effect of universal harmony.⁶⁴ Ligorio declares that *salus publica* figured as Hygeia was to the pagans what the Saviour is to Christians.⁶⁵ In the central inscription of the palazzina commemorating Pius IV, he is named “Medices”, in reference to his former profession and the name he shared with the Florentine family.⁶⁶

The palazzina façade continues references to earthly and celestial music. On the first floor reliefs of satyrs with syrinx and pipe beneath roundels of river gods flank labelled stucco niches showing the Horai and Apollo and Aegle, an image of solar splendour like the two pairs of facing gorgoneia on the lower level of the palazzina and loggia.⁶⁷ Dea natura reappears in an exquisite shell mosaic which dominates the portico of the palazzina. The upper storey of the palazzina has reliefs of Fame, a Victory and an urn. Rich borders of acanthus scroll decoration like the Della Valle acanthus relief appear throughout the Casino exterior, contributing to the impression that the façades are assemblages of *spolia* whose symmetrical display communicates the iconography of consonance and correspondence. The Casino also contained real *spolia*—cosmatesque work from the apse of Old St Peters (a double *spolia*) and approximately fifty one statues mostly removed by Pius V, including no less than four statues named “Mnemosine”.⁶⁸ The “facciata museo” of symmetrically

64 For Aesculapius, father of Hygeia, as musician who restores the body to harmony and companion of the Muses, see Turin 11, fol. 166r: Ligorio mentioned a relief of Aesculapius and Hygeia amongst the sculptures of the Vatican “Limphaeo”; see *Pirro Ligorio e le Erme di Roma*, ed. B.P. Venetucci (Rome: Quasar, 1992), 156.

65 “Salus publica appresso de noi christiani non è altro che Iddio salvatore: et presso i Gentili è la figliuola di Asculapius”, Naples 3, fol. 288/147v.

66 PIUS IIII MEDICES MEDIOLANEN. PONTIFEX MAXIMUS IN NEMORE PALATII VATICANI PORTICUM ABSIDATAM CUM COLUMNIS NUMIDICIS FONTIBUS LYMPHAEO IMMINENTEM E REGIONE AREAE EXTRUXIT. ANN. SAL. MDLXI. Gian Angelo Medici was permitted to use the arms of the Florentine Medici on his election as cardinal in 1549; see Madonna and Fagiolo, “Casina”, 277–78.

67 The satyr with pipe may be Terambo, inventor of bucolic songs or idylls, companion of the Muses and beloved by Pan (Turin 11 fol. 243r). At *ibid.*, fol. 135 the ‘satyric’ music of the tibia is associated with the *magna mater*. For Aegle as mother of the Horai at Naples 3, fol. 42; on Aegle’s shield as solar splendour, which dazzles the eyes and can be penetrated by the mind alone, see Naples 3, fol. 307v; Aegle is said to bear the gorgoneion at Turin 23, fol. 338 bis (mod. ed. *Libro degli eroi*, 139). On the gorgoneion as the splendour and terror of the sun, see Naples 8, fol. 112r. At Turin 12, fol. 72v, the gorgoneion is said to be sculpted on ships, as Medusa, beloved of Neptune, was “mistress of the sea”.

68 See Smith, “Stucco decoration”, 120. On the 1566 inventory and dispersal of the statue collection, see Gaston, “Antiques”; Losito, *Pirro Ligorio*, 50–52, 142–43, doc. 13, 146–47, docs 24–31. The statues included two Dianas, six Muses, two Hygeias, two Junos, a Venus and an Aesculapius, Dea natura and *Salus* which appears in the stucco decoration and



FIGURE 12.11 *Casino of Pius IV, façade of palazzina.*

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.



FIGURE 12.12 *Casino of Pius IV, portico of palazzina with rustic mosaic of the Dea natura.*
PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR
KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.

displayed spolia is linked to multi-level allegory centred on the iconography of the Muses whose multiple meanings find visual correspondence in the “symphonic” *grottesche*.⁶⁹

Within the palazzina and loggia, decorated by Federico Barocci and assistants, Federico Zuccari and assistants, Santi di Tito and Pierleone Genga, religious iconography appears, celebrating the felicity of papal rule, baptismal waters and their Old Testament types in Genesis and Exodus.⁷⁰ The continuity between pagan and sacred matter is stressed visually by the presence of fountains throughout the complex, and alluded to allegorically by the typology of the ship, which rises from physical to ‘mystical’ allegory.⁷¹ Ligorio calls it a lymphaeum, as it is commemorated in inscriptions in the grotto, as architectural fountain it is a nymphaeum, as place of the Muses, musaeum, and as a decoration with Mosaic iconography, a “Moseion”.⁷²

This sacred iconography continues to be embedded in references to the Dea natura and the Muses; in the loggia vault scenes of the Exodus are framed by figures of the Muses while the palazzina portico shows hexaemeral and Mosaic

extant statuary. Ligorio notes a Mnemosyne figure in reference to the spoliation of the Casino by Pius v and in a document in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Ferrara Ms. II 384, fol. 3v; see Losito, *Pirro Ligorio*, 148, doc. 34.

69 On the Casino in the context of architecture for display of antiquities, see Christian, “Architecture”; Herklotz, “Antiquities”, in *Display of Art*, 237.

70 Vasari *Vite* v, 562–63, mentions Barocci and Zuccari as the principal artists, also naming Lionardo Lungi, Durante del Nero and Giovanni da Cherso, for his grotesque painting in the gallery of the first floor. On Barocci at the Casino, see Bellori, *Vite*, 179; on Zuccari’s work in the loggia, Borghini, *Il Riposo*, 141. See Smith *Casino*, 64–75.

71 There are fountains in the central court, and in the apses of the loggia and portico of the palazzina. The fountains form a circuit of waters which is both ‘oceanic’ and suggestive of the allegorical continuum, with meanings rising from one level to another. Ligorio’s book on ships in Turin 12 fols 51r–148v gives Christian and pagan types—ships dedicated to the Dea natura, ancient ceremonial ships, the naumachia as ‘musical’ ludi, Noah’s ark and the Navicella.

72 The inscription PIUS IV PONTIFEX MAXIMUS LYMPHAEUM HOC CONDIDIT ANTIQUISQUE STATUIS EXORNAVIT appears above the niches of the grotto. Madonna and Fagiolo, “Casina”, 243, n. 33, note further references to the Casino as “Limphaeo” at Turin 19 and Naples 4; they call it a “Moseion” at “Casina”, 274. The Belvedere *Cleopatra* in 1550 was moved into a fountain room with mythological and biblical scenes concerning Moses and baptism. Brummer, *Statue Court*, 254, compares the design of the Belvedere fountain room to Francisco de Holanda’s sketch of the Grotto of Egeria. Losito, *Pirro Ligorio*, 20–21, suggests the hillside Grotto, with its nymphaeum, richly adorned walls, encircling waters and T-shaped plan, as a source of inspiration for Ligorio, who called it a “grove consecrated to the Muses”, “[Numa] consacrò quel Boschetto alle Muse”, (Turin 18, fol. 6).

iconography in the vault and apses, above herms of the planetary gods and a frieze of a circus with putti racing (a planetary allegory) while the walls are dominated by the mosaic of the Dea natura.⁷³ Dea natura appears above papal thrones in the corners of the vaults of the first chamber of the palazzina, where Christian iconography commences.⁷⁴ In corresponding corners in the second chamber, three female figures on a tripod repeat a motif from Hadrian's Villa and reiterate the Muses-Graces-Hōrai theme.⁷⁵ The principal Christian images of the first chamber depict the Holy Family, the Navicella, and the Baptism of Christ; those of the second chamber are the Annunciation and a series of four allegorical scenes, three of which concern life-giving springs.⁷⁶ They are framed by refined *grotesche* which reflect the variety of styles and modes of ancient painting—airy topographic scenes, refined naturalistic images of birds and plants, poetic miniatures showing vases, masks and putti at play, and the hybrid metamorphic vitality of the arabesques. The *grotesche* as repositories of the variety of ancient art and exemplars of its three-fold allegorical character are brought together with the universality and typology of sacred images. The decorations combine the encyclopaedism of Raphael's Logge with the juxtaposition of chthonic and luminous elements exploited at Villa Madama.⁷⁷

73 The portico and loggia have identical circus-shaped plans which recall the portico of Peruzzi's Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne. On Peruzzi's palace and the Casino, see Friedländer, *Kasino*, 121, 30; Smith *Casino*, 25–26. Mosaic scenes show Moses striking the rock and the gathering of manna; the hexaemeral images show creation, the four rivers of paradise and the labours of life out of paradise. Bouchet and Rochette in *Villa Pia*, Inv. ix, call the portico “vestibolo della creazione”. Ligorio discusses the planetary symbolism of the circus in *Libro delle antichità di Roma* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1553), 12r–13r. The motif of putti racing appears in the reliefs of the Maritime Theatre of Hadrian's Villa; see Venetucci, *Erme di Roma*, 1, 43, which reproduces drawings from Codex Ursinianus fols 61r and 52r.

74 See Smith *Casino*, 81–82, for discussion of allusion to the *sellisternium*, the throne held empty for a god and the *Etimasia*, the throne prepared for the Second Coming of Christ. The thrones are flanked by paired personifications: Concordia and Liberalitas; Immortalitas and Aeternitas; Virtus and Tranquillitas; Laetitia and Felicitas.

75 Dacos, *Découverte*, pl. 40, fig. 72, shows Peruzzi's sketch (Siena Codex, fol. 19) of the vault of the central hall of the Thermae at Hadrian's Villa. The Muses reappear in *grotesche* in the gallery on the first floor of the palazzina with Hercules, as musagetes; on Hercules as musagetes and musician, see Turin 11, fol. 166r; 170r.

76 The secondary scenes in the first chamber show Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well, the woman taken in adultery, John the Baptist preaching, St Anthony Abbot searching for the hermit Paul and four prophets. Those of the second chamber show the life of Joseph, symbols of the Evangelists, Mosaic scenes, the four doctors of the church and Occasio.

77 For Ligorio's admiration of Raphael's Logge, see Turin 8, fol. 152r, SAC III, 2670.



FIGURE 12.13 *Casino of Pius IV, palazzina, vault of first room.*

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.



FIGURE 12.14 *Casino of Pius IV, palazzina, vault of second room.*

PHOTO: BIBLIOTECA HERTZIANA—MAX PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR KUNSTGESCHICHTE, ROME.

While at Villa Madama this juxtaposition is handled through the architectural articulation of the topography, the Casino renders it iconographically, in the “concord of correspondences” of the *alto e profondo musico*.

The juxtaposition of Muses and Moses advances Raphael’s Logge, recalling Philo’s description of the Muses hymning creation, and his comparison of their chorus to the making of Paradise.⁷⁸ At the core of this reflection is the repeated appearance of the Hōrai, whose names allude to Justice, Good Law and Peace (*Dikē, Eunomia, Irenē*) and who signify the good order in government that corresponds to the concord of the seasons and the diurnal cycle in nature.⁷⁹ Smith reads the relief urn in the centre of the upper storey of the palazzina as a reference to urns from which the Hōrai dispense good to mortals, and central to the Casino’s iconography.⁸⁰ The Hōrai return us to the continuity between physical and moral order in *kosmos*. They signify the order that becomes manifest as divine law appears through the proper division and due proportion that underlies all justice and all harmony. Through the cyclical dance of the Hōrai things arrive at their growth and perfection and renewal; they are said to be origins or companions of the Muses and their mother Themis is identified with nature, justice and providence.⁸¹

78 See Chapter 1; for translations of Philo in the Quattrocento, see Chapter 10, n. 48.

79 The political and physical allegory of the Hōrai is expounded by Ligorio frequently, for example at Naples 3, fols 23r–26v, 33r, 91r–92v, 149r, 150r, 172v, 188v, 202r; Naples 6, fols 235v, 269r. At Naples 3, fols 23v and 91v, the Hōrai appear around the neck of Diana of Ephesus. An exposition of the significance of the Hōrai was made by an associate and admirer of Ligorio, the Flemish antiquarian Stephanus Pighius in his *Themis dea seu de lege divina* (1566). The herm which forms the subject of the dialogue was identified by Ligorio in Turin 23, fols 17–18 (*Libro degli eroi*, 16), as showing Venus and the Graces. Ligorio in his description responds to the variance between his identification and that of Pighius on the grounds that there were two herms, one with the Graces and one with the Hōrai. For Ligorio and Pighius on the herm, see Venetucci, *Erme di Roma*, 319–321. The images of great masks signifying the seasons with which Pighius illustrates *Themis* appear in Muziano’s decorations in the frieze of the Salotto at the Villa d’Este and in Zuccari’s decorations in the Summer apartments at Caprarola.

80 Smith “Stucco decoration”, 148. Ligorio discusses the urns of the Hōrai in Naples 3, fols 23r, 25r; Oxford fol. 84v.

81 Naples 3, fol. 25r: “l’una con l’altra danzando, dimostrano menare il tempo in gire . . . le Hore distribuiscono il tempo agli huomini, cioe dimostrano li frutti ai mortali che deono acquistare et dispensare”; “con le Hore si muovano tutti et arrivano all’augmento et al fine et al nuovo accrescimento”, *ibid.*, 92r. The Hōrai are said to “fill and empty the space of human life” “empiono ò vuotano le stanze humane”, their cloaks are painted with all things they govern (*ibid.* fol. 188v). See *ibid.*, fol. 33r on the Hōrai as the first Muses. Themis “rappresenta la Natura et providentia et giustizia de Iddio”, *ibid.*, fol. 149r.

The universal harmony in which the good government of Pius IV and antique art share is not presented through a reflection on proportion but through a dense aggregation of figures and allusions to topography or building types. The constant appeals to music serve to endorse the “harmony” of the proliferating detail and connote temporal allusions to *renovatio*, natural cycles, providence and *memoria* in its various senses. The accumulated references to spectacle building—naumachia, circus, chorus of the Muses—also stress a reiterative temporality.⁸²

The Casino presents itself as a digest of the *memorie* recorded by Ligorio, so that each ‘concordant’ image is synthetic with respect to sources and analogous with regard to the other iconography of the site.⁸³ Its cyclical continuity is also a containment, embodied architecturally in the enclosed, cyclical form of the Casino, a *musaeum* that ends up as a refined birdcage of the Muses within whose walls analogies are heaped. When the meaning of everything lies in its embodiment of harmony, *consonantia* can move towards tautology. The very success of the Casino, the continuity between its levels of representation and their reflection of one another is also its problematic aspect, as it creates closure or circularity. The paradigm of music, where every interval is filled and discord overlooked, and the allegorical “concordia delle corrispondenze” do not acknowledge that disruption may be a necessary element in renovation, if it is not to collapse into reiteration. Ligorio’s assumption that an allegorical structure can be projected onto a topography and that the same principles and conditions of meaning can be transposed between the various visual arts contributes to the difficulties. In the evocation of universal harmony, the distinction between frame and content, ornament and adorned recede, meaning that multiple metaphors take the place of a narrative and reiterative temporal analogies substitute the temporality of a history.

As *istoria* is submerged in the grotesques to the requirements of visual ordering which claims to be at once geometric and figurative, so Ligorio subsumes the particularity of ancient narratives to repeated manifestations of formal and allegorical concord. This engagement with multiple patterning can yield the rich delicacy and beauty which is indeed apparent at the Casino but

82 Spectacle buildings are central to Ligorio’s *Libro delle antichità di Roma*. See Oxford, fols 43r–54v, 66r–69r for discussions of theatre, *ludi* and plan of a hippodrome. Ligorio’s design and account of Varro’s Aviary (Turin 12, fols 227r, 228v–230v) contained the elements of the Casino—triclinium, temple (*tholos*), piscina and musaeum, “all in the form of a little theatre” (*theatridio*).

83 Smith, “Stucco decoration”, 130, observes that the statues in the tabernacles of the loggia are sculpture and represent sculpture.

Ligorio creates for himself an understanding of antique art in which everything becomes a great structure of mediation, epitomised by the “*sensi poetici*”. The continuity, correspondence and relatedness within this structure have the unfortunate effect of overwhelming our orientation to what lies beyond it. We see this in the circling analogies of the Casino and in the proliferating paths of the Villa D’Este. At Tivoli, the attempt at re-grounding and the invocation of destruction as the condition of change cannot lift the great field of mediation as these attempts are produced and determined by that field. The “*concordia delle corrispondenze*” creates a realm of artifice whose sense and reference—despite Ligorio’s declared intentions—ultimately concerns its internal patterning of analogy.

In this sense, the outcome of Ligorio’s efforts resembles Carl’s analysis of grotesque decoration:

a field of narrative fragments embedded in a complex simultaneity of implicit projective space and explicit regenerative iconography... although these vaults generally display a hierarchy of frames, which enables one to identify the main theme, the explicit absorption of the topic into the universal metamorphosis of the whole vault only makes more noticeable the loss of mimetic distance, and therefore of primary orientation... we may say that these vaults are less concerned to reconcile a particular situation with a universal context than they are symptomatic of a rupture in the very possibility of such a reconciliation. The term *horror vacui*... often used to describe these vaults, is relevant only if it is recognized that grotesque-work represents a highly deliberated, sustained and very sophisticated exploration of every nuance of the *vacuo*.⁸⁴

Grottesche, Language and Literature

We have discussed the *grottesche* as a kind of meta-painting which can show all things and chart possibilities of variation and transformation; alternatively, this display may be associated with particular kinds of ‘disordered’ variety or poetic license. The latter is stated emphatically in the verses engraved beneath a phytomorph scroll designed by Perino del Vaga which declares the *ut pictura poesis* dictum exhibited by the image and Rome, and its grottoes, from which “light” and art now return. Lomazzo hints at both possibilities when he states

84 Carl, “Ornament and Time”, 53.



FIGURE 12.15 *Master of the Die after Perino del Vaga, ornament print, 1532–53.*
 Metropolitan Museum, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953.
 PHOTO: WWW.METMUSEUM.ORG.

the universality unique to *grotesche*, which alone can depict all that can be discovered and imagined while insisting on their metaphoric character and the *furore* which the artist of *grotesche* must possess (*Trattato*, VI.49).⁸⁵

While *grotesche* can be executed in various manners, from delicacy to seething vigour or airy savagery, there is considerable continuity in the forms of transformation, as though certain conventions of visual metamorphosis governed the 'chimeras'. Symmetry and the 'heraldic' disposition of creatures (symmetrical doubling to each side of a vertical axis) are such conventions; elaboration of outlines into scrolls of vegetation that provide links or possibility for transformations is another. Certain forms consistently provide the basis for metamorphosis, as flowers turn into chalices or baldachins or the serpentine form of the tendril becomes a cornucopia, torch or creature (dolphin, snake, swan or monster). The associated forms of the volute or scroll become 'lively' as they figure the neck or dorsal line in movement.⁸⁶ The serpentine line later discussed by Lomazzo as the line of grace or of figural torsion thus forms the base of these transformations that animate the universe of visible and imaginable things.⁸⁷ Sometimes these forms can suggest allusions to ancient iconographic motifs, as the mask whose beard elongates into dolphins or foliate volutes may carry a residual reference to the iconography of Oceanus. Ligorio, reflecting on the rhythms and figural patterning that the *grotesche* share with poetry, likened them to palinodes—suggesting symmetry, fortuitous resemblance and enigma.⁸⁸ This harmonious spatial effect that emerges from apparent discord leads Ligorio to an exploration of the possibilities of visual metaphor. The metamorphoses of the *grotesche* in short provide a field of visual equivocations and from the repetition of certain motifs the issue arises of whether they chart conditions for figurative meaning in images.

85 Lomazzo, *Scritti*, 367: "in queste grottesche il pittore esprime le cose et i concetti, non con le proprie, ma con altre figure". Lomazzo gives an exhaustive list of the things which may be depicted in the *grotesche* as in no other form of art, concluding "tutto quello che si può trovare et imaginare" and noting "nell'invenzione delle grottesche più che in ogn'altra vi corre un certo furore" (*ibid.*, 369).

86 Cf. Iago's monstrous reference to the "beast with two backs", *Othello* I.I.117–19.

87 For Gilio *Dialogo*, III, contorted figures (*sforzate*) are like figures doing "moresche"; see *ibid.*, 48–49, 54–55 on *sforzi*.

88 Ligorio, *Libro dell'antichità*, Turin 8 fol. 153v, SAC, III, 2676: "they show consonance in their subjects, and similarly in their repetitions and correspondences they are parallel in the manner of a palinode"; "sono di soggetto di consonantia, e conformemente sono parallele a guisa d'una palinodia per replicate e corrispondenti". See David Coffin, "Pirro Ligorio and Decoration of the Late Sixteenth Century at Ferrara", *Art Bulletin* 37, 3 (1955), 167–185.

Morel speaks of a 'logic of hybridisation' with the work of Giovanni da Udine, and quotes the passage from Francisco de Holanda which states the 'laws' governing the invention of *grottesche* chimeras: there should be no deformation of elements (for example, ten fingers on a hand) but a substitution of one perfect part from one species for that of another, the tail of a dolphin joined to the body of a gryphon or a deer.⁸⁹ Equivalence and analogy provide a basis for the creation of hybrids and structure the decorative invention; despite their 'monstrous' character, the *grottesche* work with metaphor based in reciprocity.

Ligorio's "hieroglyphic" concept of *grottesche* is shared by Lomazzo, for whom the dignity of painting is linked to the role of disegno as "first writing".⁹⁰ The hieroglyphic character is also linked to their association with Dea natura, as we saw in the Logge, as goddess/idea of generation and creation as process, or with Proteus, figure for prime matter.⁹¹ Ligorio's multiple allegory is an attempt to co-ordinate the diverse questions of meaning raised by the grotesques—beyond issues of 'hieroglyphics' and chance resemblances lies the matter of how we represent the becoming of things in the fantasy, apart from their attributes which art can alter with such disturbing ease. The spiralling line, as much as the metamorphoses it engenders, depicts the artist's metaphoric invention. What is disquieting is the grotesques' exhibition of the violence done to substances by metaphor and the revelation that metaphor may not illuminate latent correspondences but merely display an artificial manipulation of attributes and qualities.

Considered in relation to individual referents, the *grottesche* create similitudes often derived from a visual equivocation. Considered *en masse* as allegorical, they depict a surging force of generation that animates all things—which in turn correspond to each other as they share in it. At this second level come the allusions to *natura naturans* and shape-changing gods like Vertumnus or Proteus.⁹² As noted above, Renaissance allusions to Proteus take him as a

89 Morel, *Grotesques*, 85.

90 On disegno as "first writing", like the hieroglyphs, see *Scritti*, 382.

91 Cellini's design for the seal of the Florentine Academy featured an "Iddea della natura" (goddess/idea of nature) above an quasi hieroglyphic alphabet based on images of tools and Cellini's statement on the nature of *disegno* as the "origin and principle of all the actions of man". See Cole, *Cellini*, 121–4.

92 Proteus and Vertumnus appear in Comanini's *Figino*, 268, with its praise of Arcimboldo's composite heads and its characterisation of literary and artistic imitation as a "protean" transformation. Arcimboldo's *Vertumnus* and his other *teste* allude to the tradition of seeing forms in other objects but place this in service of depictions of concept and category formation. Lomazzo renders the notion in astrological terms in *Trattato* VI.27, 305,

figure for imagination and the uniquely human capacities to invent, vary and transform—as well as the older sophistic character of Proteus.⁹³

The co-presence of these two levels of reading, *en masse* and individual, shows why analogies between *grotesche* and language require careful handling. Morel's conception of the *grotesche* as a language involves reference to 'logic' and 'discourse' and presents a linguistic schema, giving correspondences of 'word' and 'syntax' in the decoration.⁹⁴ This tendency is encouraged by the Logge with their collection-fragmentation of a thesaurus of images to be combined and varied and by Ligorio and Lomazzo's notion of the *grotesche* as symbols, but the linguistic analogy can result in misleading assumptions concerning a signifying structure which Morel wisely resists at the level of iconography.⁹⁵ That said, the comparison with grammar does however illuminate an area of some importance, and this concerns the conditions of predication which the *grotesche* appear to challenge.

The *grotesche* highlight the unsettling fact that art—and language—can use the same procedures to make true and false representations. This is noted in Daniele Barbaro's comparison of *grotesche*, "the dream of painting", to sophistry, with its "monstrous" hybrids, like the phantasms of dream—an echo of ancient and medieval allusions to art as sophistry.⁹⁶ Such allusions reappear in Renaissance celebrations of the Protean character of art, or poetry; one example is Sambucus' emblem entitled "Poetica", whose *figura* contains the inscription "Chaos" and whose motto relates how nothing is proper to poetry which mixes truth and fiction and imitates everything.⁹⁷

where he states that trophies, garlands and *grotesche* take on the nature of everything as Mercury takes on the nature of all planets it accompanies.

93 See Ficino, "imaginatio est tanquam Protheus vel Cameleon", translation of Priscian of Lydia, *Opera* II, 1825, quoted in Garin, "Phantasia e imaginatio fra Marsilio Ficino e Pietro Pomponazzi", *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 64 (1985), 349–61.

94 Morel, *Grotesques*, 23–35.

95 See Lomazzo, *Scritti* II, 369, on the figurative character of *grotesche* and their similarity to hieroglyphs, emblems and *imprese*: "venivano fatte non altrimenti che enimmi o cifere, o figure egizie, dimandate ieroglifici, per significare alcun concetto o pensiero sotto altre figure, come noi usiamo negli emblemi e nelle imprese".

96 Barbaro, *I dieci libri*, 321: "le Grottesche . . . senza dubbio potemo nominare sogni della pittura. Simil cosa vedemo noi nell'arti del parlare, imperoche . . . il Sofista fa cose monstruose, e tali, quali ci rappresenta la fantasia, quando i nostri sentimenti sono chiusi dal sonno".

97 Joannes Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1564), 50. The laurel-wreathed figure of poetry stands by a table with paint brushes and palette. Barbaro distinguishes sophistry from poetry (*Dieci libri*, 321).

In the *grotesche*, the naturalism with which each particular is rendered is no bar to the redistribution of qualities to represent inexistent things. We see permutations of combination or variation of parts—body parts or elements from existing artworks, as in the seemingly exhaustive explorations of the Logge. To this extent the *grotesche* share features with manuals for creating *copia* or such schemata as Camillo's 'theatres' for linguistic and pictorial invention, consisting of taxonomies of parts pertaining to various categories, to be selected, varied and combined.

The *grotesche* however diverge from language, which must refer to substances, however strangely they are qualified. The *grotesche* tease with the question of whether transformation makes figures metaphoric, symbolic or unintelligible. They show a mass of unnameable things; things, that is, where the relation between substance and qualities is lost. Both at the level of individual metamorphoses and at the level of whole configurations, we see the disappearance of a final cause. The *grotesche* show the subversive potential of imaginative play to erode distinctions between substances and the insubstantial. Their very delicacy thus becomes a provocation, as it suggests the fragility of such distinctions. They allude to the semantic requirement in decorative ordering while challenging the limits of meaning versus ordering.

The *grotesche* are repeatedly used to display 'hieroglyphs', in such diverse settings as the fraudulent 'Egyptology' of the Borgia Apartments, Alessandro Araldi's decorations in the Convento di San Paolo (1514), Parma, where they appear above images from Horapollo or the Library of the Monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma (1573–75) where they carry 'hieroglyphs' and tablets with inscriptions in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syrian.⁹⁸ The congeniality of the *grotesche* to 'hieroglyphs' lies the association of the fantasy and dream with symbolic representation, with its monstrosities veiling mysteries, such as we find in Proclus' discussion of symbolic mimesis. The hieroglyph association could also indicate falsity; Comanini notes the capricious element in hieroglyphs and rehearses the ancient allusion to fabulous creatures, like centaurs, as figures for idols of fantasy.⁹⁹ The theme is developed with vehemence in Paleotti's fulminations against gods of darkness represented by the chaotic, subterranean *grotesche*.¹⁰⁰

98 On San Giovanni Evangelista, see Morel, *Grotesques*, 49–61, 123–37; Zamperini, *Grotesche*, 117, 158. On the Borgia apartments, see Mattinageli, *Annio da Viterbo*; Cieri Via, "Sacrae effigies e signa arcana: la decorazione di Pintoricchio e scuola nell'appartamento Borgia in Vaticano", in *Roma centro ideale*, 185–200.

99 Comanini, *Figino*, 256, 318.

100 See Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* 11.37–11.42, 222r–241v; modern edition TA 11, 117–509, on *grotesche* 425–52. Paleotti, citing Tertullian, discusses the idol

Discussion of the *grottesche* as hieroglyphs raises the question of when and how images become signs. Always discussed in the plural, the grotesques constitute a medium and apparently create a context for the representation of the plethora of individual things they carry. It is however characteristic of *grottesche* that things carried in turn become metamorphic vehicles which carry other things, with the constant shifting of locus or frame—hence Ligorio's multi-level reading, which modulates as we move from line to metamorphic image to depicted object. The grotesques' 'enlivening' appearance in all materials also recalls Fasinini's endorsement of the application of 'hieroglyphic' decorations to all objects.

The candelabra configuration of *grottesche* both works formally as a device for display and suggests a mass of potential pictograms or symbols. They appear to stand half way between images and signs, which entail the clarification of concepts as referents. This is appropriate for the *grottesche* as figures of the fantasy, which lies between the sensory synthesis of the common sense and the intellectual operations that start with cogitation. The 'sub-conceptual' character of the *grottesche* has also been seen in their organisation in geometric configurations, which suggested to Morel something like a proto-linguistic arrangement, with reiterated structures 'generating' patterns of repetitions and variants. The patterning however seems to emphasise the non-linguistic nature of the grotesques, and create tension with their plethora of signification.

In *grottesche*, *imprese* and 'hieroglyphs' allegorical meaning involves the assemblage of a sign, or the aggregation of signs into a structure. The aggregative character which the *grottesche* share with *imprese* may be one reason why they become the characteristic framing device of *imprese*, notably at Caprarola (see Chapter 9, Fig. 4).¹⁰¹ The *grottesche* can be used to underline the fleeting, illusory nature of allegories, as in Doni's *Pitture*, which he calls "certe grottesche in aria" and grotesques hanging from a spider's thread.¹⁰² As a fancy, *grottesche* signal the invented nature of allegory which does not

as an image that is not and cannot be: "forma apparente, ma che manca di subsistenza e verità" (1.13). Paleotti uses *grottesco* adjectivally; see Ossola, *Autunno del Rinascimento*, 194. Ligorio was Paleotti's informant on the *grottesche*.

101 *Grottesche* appear alongside devices in the Borgia Apartments and the Logge. On *capricci* and "monstrosities" in inventing *imprese*, see Taegio, *Il Liceo*, quoted in Ossola, *Autunno*, 229: "Il formare delle imprese... è quasi come una ventura d'un capriccioso cervello" which produces monsters more often than *concetti* "più tosto mostri dell'intelletto, che imagini del concetto".

102 Doni, *Le pitture* (Padua: Gratosio Perchacino, 1564), 6r, 14r. Cristina del Lungo, "La zucca del Doni e la struttura della 'grottesca'", *Paradigma* 2 (1978), 71–91, notes that *Pitture* appears in the 1565 edition of Doni's *La zucca* as "Il seme della zucca", subtitled "di Chimere e Castegli in aria".

reveal doctrine or hidden realities through its poetic veils; Caro's association of masks and metaphors carries similar connotations of instability, *larvae*, play and varied, non-essential accidental similarities which can be assumed and discarded.¹⁰³ As fragmentary images, the grotesques show allegory conceived in terms of fragmentary, discontinuous emblematic figures rather than sustained narratives.

Caro also provides a literary association of grotesque metamorphosis, perspectival trickery and sophistry. The *Apologia* against Castelvetro contains a burlesque dream vision ("Sogno di Ser Fedocco"), describing a crystal palace (*castel vetro*) whose splendour is revealed to be optical illusion, alluding to the specious arguments of Castelvetro's work; the place in fact contains squalid insects and creatures, amongst which is the owl (*barbagianno*), a reference to Castelvetro's 'Athenian' *impresa*.¹⁰⁴ The owl is captured and tortured grotesquely in a species of anti-triumph.¹⁰⁵ The mixture of fantasy, chimera, evocation of a place populated by horrible or nocturnal creatures and illusion, is in the tradition of writings about *grottesche*. The shining palace also suggests Fregoso's *Dialogo di Fortuna* where Fortune's gorgeous palace is revealed to be dirt and mist, and its inhabitants are monstrous grotesques.

A chimerical palace reappears as a figure for critique of literary theory in Battista Guarini's *Il Verato secondo*, his second defence of the *Pastor Fido* against the criticisms of Giason Denores.¹⁰⁶ Like Daniele Barbaro's comparison of the *grottesche* to the mixture of truth, falsehood and chimeras in sophistry, Guarini calls Denores' *Discorso* a mixture of something good (plagiarised from Aristotle) and something robbed or misunderstood and the rest just chimeras and dreams.¹⁰⁷ Guarini compares Denores' *Discorso* to a scene with beautiful palaces and temples which are constituted of "legni fessi, asse tronche, travi spezzate, immondiglie, sconcerti, tele d'aragne, e somiglianti brutture e deformità".¹⁰⁸ The spider's webs, detritus and chimeras of the *grotte* and *grottesche* are associated with the spatial distortion and optical illusion of scenography.

103 Caro, *Apologia*, 182–3.

104 Ibid., 243–49. Castelvetro's *impresa* showed an owl, bird of Athena, with the motto *kekrika* ("I have judged").

105 Ibid.

106 *Il Verato secondo overo replica dell'attizzato accademico ferrarese in difesa del Pastor fido* (Florence, 1593), in Guarini, *Opere* III (Verona: Giovanni Alberto Tumermani, 1738), 371. The volume reprints the two criticisms and two defences of Guarini and Denores.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., 372, discussed in Ossola, *Autunno*, 205–6.

Acanthus or ivy also figured in literary criticism, positively and negatively. Beroaldo equated it with winding ornament in his Propertius commentary: "acanthus pro flexuoso ornatu accipit".¹⁰⁹ Ercole Ciofano's commentary on *Metamorphoses* used acanthus to praise the artful, ornate delight of *entrelace*, elaborating the ancient statements of its pliant, twisting (*flexus*) nature (Theocritus 1.55–56; Virgil, *Ecl.* III.45; *Ecl.* IV.20).¹¹⁰ Ariosto cultivates metaphors of acanthus (as Ciofano noted) and ivy, the second transmitted through *Inferno* xxv.58–60 where thieves metamorphose into serpents that wrap themselves like ivy around their victims.¹¹¹ Ariosto's interweaving of material also means that allusions layered in the narrative shift in significance and are progressively reframed.¹¹² In *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* II, Tasso uses the serpent-ivy image critically of poems with multiple plots, which entangle disparate matter through monstrous, snake-like links and transformations.¹¹³ The pleasure of the varied, flexible and promiscuous is critiqued as monstrosity; the pliant, twining acanthus as figure for the poet's skill and delight turns to the serpentine *grottesche*.

The *grottesche* feature most prominently in writings which advertise their burlesque, capricious or miscellaneous character. Montaigne in his *Essais*, a new kind of miscellaneous literature, compares them to *grottesche*; Doni alludes to grotesques as images for his own writings.¹¹⁴ The 'disordered', hybrid qualities shared by the *Essais* and burlesque writing have a common source in the *silva*, with its *copia* and its chaotic, "frenzied" rush of inspiration. An

109 Glossing Propertius III.9.14 (III.3 in Beroaldo's text), "Myos exiguum flectit acanthus iter".

110 See Chapter 3, n. 94, for classical references. Ciofano extols its capacity to be bent into any shape: "quo quis vult, contorquetur, flectitur, ac porrigitur", glossing *Metamorphoses* XIII.700–701, in *Herculis Ciofani Sulmonensis in omnia P. Ovidii Nasonis opera observationes* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1581), 253–55, discussed in Denis Looney, *Compromising the Classics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 207–08, n. 5; *ibid.*, 170–71, for Ciofano's praise of *entrelace*.

111 See *ibid.*, 98–99, 124–27, 129–39, on comparisons of Ariosto and *Metamorphoses*, on ivy or serpentine metaphors and Ariosto's play with interposition, "intertextual crossing point[s]" and erotic entanglement. Ciofano includes *Orlando Furioso* xxv.69.5–8 in his acanthus allusions.

112 Looney, *Compromising*, 124–25.

113 Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* II, 522.

114 Montaigne in "De l'Amitié", *Essais* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), 231, calls his essays "crottesques et corps monstueux, rappiepez de divers membres, sans certaine figure, n'ayants ordre, suite ny proportion que fortuite"—"monstrosities and grotesques botched together from a variety of limbs having no defined shape, with an order, sequence and proportion which are merely fortuitous" (*The Complete Essays*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin, 1997), 206).

excellent example comes in Caro's parody commentary to Molza's burlesque *Ficheide*, the *Ficaruolo Sopra la Prima Ficata Del Padre Siceo* (1539), relating Francesco Berni's entry into the garden of the Muses, a parody Parnassus revealed to be the *orto* of Priapus.¹¹⁵ Caro's preface contains a mock description of the birth of *capricci* in the brain where whims and frenzies teem like creatures in the fantasy and the memory, turning the mind to chaos and bursting out in the form of published writings.¹¹⁶

As we saw, the *silva* also carries associations of ephemerality, of abundant matter garnered from long study, of the 'disordered' aggregation of miscellaneous material.¹¹⁷ Doni's discussion of *furore poetico* and *capriccio fantastico* and his account of the sudden inspiration from which the writer's heterogeneous content flows clearly derives from the *silva*; his advertisement of his rapid, unrevised literary production, "written on the day it was printed" shows the abundance of the *silva* turn to the commercial production of the *poligrafo*.¹¹⁸ Doni uses comparable language in *Il disegno* of the artist who invents *chimere* from the "chaos" of his brain. Similarly, the prolific output of the *grottesche* painter may not be seen as evidence of surging creativity but of mediocre superfluity.¹¹⁹

The inspiration, speed and abundance required of the painter of *grottesche* by Lomazzo and Armenini indeed echo Quintilian's descriptions of the *silva* as a rapid, profuse outpouring of material. Armenini describes the painter sketching designs rapidly "invaghitosi di un suo inusitato capriccio" until a

115 Cf. the obscene visual puns made by Giovanni da Udine in the vegetal swags in the Sala di Psiche at the Farnesina. Molza's parody works were first composed in the context of the Accademia dei Vignaiuoli, whose members included Berni, Della Casa, Giovio and Firenzuola. Molza and Caro collaborated through their association at the Accademia dei Virtuosi and Accademia degli Sdegnati, committed to the renewal of classical, qualitative metre in verse as proposed by Claudio Tolomei in *Versi et regole della nuova poesia Toscana* (1539). See Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1930), VI, 141, 466–67, 478–80.

116 Caro, *Commento Di Ser Agresto da Ficaruolo Sopra la Prima Ficata Del Padre Siceo* ("Bengodi: Barbagrigia", i.e. Rome: Antonio Blado, 1539), 2r–2v. The passage is full of exuberant linguistic invention with coined nonsense words.

117 Poliziano in the dedication of *Manto* calls it a "garden of Adonis", i.e. an ephemeral creation. Sadoletto similarly speaks of Ariosto writing "ludicro more, longo tamen studio et cogitatione, multisque vigiliis confeceris", *Orlando Furioso* (Ferrara: Giovanni Mazocco dal Bondeno, 1516), sig. a2.

118 Del Lungo, "La zucca", 76–78.

119 See *ibid.*, 80, on Paleotti's criticism of the disparate contents of *grottesche* as sign of a "mediocre ingegno", compared to disordered narrative (*Discorsi* II.40, 233, repr. TA II, 440).

space is full of innumerable lines, and one can see there “stranissime forme d'uomini e di cose ripieno”—an allusion to forms made by chance.¹²⁰ Ossola regards the *capriccio* as a mode of work as well as a momentary act; again it is a form associated with fancy and rapid invention or execution founded on an extensive repertoire.¹²¹ He notes that Dolce terms the painter's first sketches *fantasie* or *capriccio*.¹²²

The precedent of the *silva* can thus enrich understanding of the relation of burlesque writings and grotesques, as in Doni's praise of Francesco Berni as “poet of grotesques”.¹²³ The *silva* and the *grottesche* also both have names which allude to place and its role in invention and ordering; each is a revived antique form which is also a carrier of recovered antiquities. For burlesque writers, the *grottesche* exemplified the attenuation of allegory into fugitive or tenuous analogies and the parodies of inspired, ‘furious’ writing—demythologised in the *silva*. The *grottesche* thus developed the chaotic potential in the disordered matter of the *silva* as in the Protean metamorphoses of *copia*.¹²⁴ Doni's references to *grottesche* carry allusions to parody or scepticism over the conditions and ordering of knowledge via encyclopaedic schemes and mnemonics. Doni's list of contents for *La zucca* is a list of fantastic, miscellaneous objects, imitated by Lomazzo in *Grotteschi*, whose universal subjects recall his comments in the *Trattato* on the universality of the *grottesche*.¹²⁵ Doni's provocative association

120 Armenini, *Precetti*, I.9, 87–8; see Ossola, *Autunno*, 180.

121 Ibid., 179.

122 Ibid., 173.

123 Doni also praised Burchiello as “Poeta Pittor di grottesche” in *Rime del Burchiello commentate dal Doni* (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1563), 4; see Morel, *Grotesques*, 90.

124 See ibid., 68, on the “accumulative, productive and indefinitely open” character of writing in *De copia*, where imitation is simultaneously variation and transformation. Rabelais is the most celebrated exponent of the erudite burlesque. Del Lungo, “*La Zucca*”, 82, notes that Doni constantly reuses canonical material alongside insertions and reworkings of his own copious writings.

125 See Ossola, *Autunno*, 201. Lomazzo's *Grotteschi* encompass God, first causes, religion, praises of famous men, ancient and modern histories, mockery of pedants and “varied fantasies”. *Grotteschi* II.17 has a poem on the theme of Lomazzo's *Idea*, stating a canon of seven artists, for ancient and modern art; III.2 concerns “fantasie dichiarate sotto metafora”; IV.138 reflects on the “immense hidden chaos” at the bottom of our hearts. Book VI, “nel quale si contengono vari grilli, chimere, bizzarrie sotto metafore”, contains incongruous lists like disordered trophies or the incipit of a Burchiello sonnet. Lomazzo's other “grotesque” poems are the macaronic, dialectal *Rabisch* (Arabesques), composed in the Accademia della Val di Blenio (Milan: Pontio, 1587); see Dante Isella's introduction to the modern edition (Turin: Einaudi, 1993) on the influences of Leonardo's grotesque heads on Lombard artists, e.g. Arcimboldo. *Rabisch* ends with descriptions of grottoes.

of the capricious *grottesche* with mnemonic techniques replaces the sequential and orderly exploitation of figure and place in the *ars memoriae* with the rival 'store' of the fantasy as 'portrayed' by *grottesche* which create complex geometric patterning from senseless conjunctions. Such associations return us to the deployment of *grottesche* in the mid and later Cinquecento.

Later Grottesche: "The Dream of Painting"

As the *grottesche* absorb more space and contain larger elements, like topographical scenes or small histories, they encroach and engulf what is placed within them.¹²⁶ Their assertion of all pictorial representation as fantastic does not just lie in metamorphoses, but in the placing of images within their field. The exhaustive range of matter they can accommodate also contains the threat of an escalating sense of fragmentation.

One can distinguish the 'encyclopaedic' quality of Giovanni da Udine's decorations in the Logge from the conglomerations and pseudo-taxonomies of later decorations, like those in the Sala di Apollo at Castel Sant'Angelo. The grotesques in later schemes exhibit the creation of a visual ambience more than an imitation of antiquities; they appear as decorative medium and constant counterpart to histories or even scientific images, such as maps, as at Caprarola. At Caprarola, as in Raphael's decorated architecture, the decorative articulation follows the plan but in a schematic triumphal iconography whose topical character we have seen. In Caro's instructions concerning Taddeo Zuccari's decoration of the *studiolo* of Caprarola he suggests *grottesche* which are topically appropriate to the room, such as instruments of solitary or studious people like globes and scientific instruments.¹²⁷ As in Lomazzo's comments on trophy ornament, the grotesques accumulate images of instruments keyed to the decorum of the room. The *grottesche* in the Uffizi gallery, by Tempesta, Allori and associates (1579–81), decorated areas leading to artistic and scientific collections, implying a taxonomic theme which is offset by the attenuated connecting forms typical of later *grottesche*—thread-like connections, drooping, wilted plants, fugitive creatures and vases with slender spi-

126 See Luchinat, *Grottesche*, 20–22, on the *grottesche* as containing genres like landscape which will develop in the seventeenth century.

127 Caro, letter to Onofrio Panvinio, *Lettere Familiari* III, 237–40; for larger ornamental sections, Caro suggests *grottesche* showing 'symbols'—i.e. animals with 'hieroglyphic' significance. Cf. Caro's letter to Taddeo Zuccaro, *ibid.*, 131–40, on the decoration of the bedroom where the disposition of the *grottesche* is left to the painter's fantasy but Caro suggests subjects linked to night. See Wohl, *Aesthetics*, 71.

rals of smoke.¹²⁸ Such *grottesche* appear in Florence from the mid-1550s in the decorations attributed to Marco da Faenza in the Quartiere degli elementi in Palazzo Vecchio.

In mid-century grotesques, the use of scrolling vegetation as a medium of metamorphosis and linkage changes to filament-like curves and lines—festoons of drapery and threads from which objects hang precariously, as Vasari described.¹²⁹ Depictions of plants often have an air of satiric delicacy, with limp grasses or exiguous tendrils appearing in place of exuberant acanthus or vines. Diverse figures and landscapes drift in blank fields of colour, linked (if at all) by the slender lines whose wandering calligraphic form suggests fancy or reverie. Exaggerated, fanciful inventions occur, like the decorations by Giovanni Andrea Paganino in Palazzo Vitelli a Sant'Egidio, Città di Castello, where the metaphoric substitutions attain a Bosch-like, hallucinatory wit.¹³⁰ By this stage, the *grottesche* have indeed become the dream of painting, as Barbaro calls them. Their fantastic, ethereal character is suggested pointedly by such motifs as the twisting columns of incense or smoke which recur in later *grottesche*, or by the continuing presence of empty masks. Terming the *grottesche* the “dream of painting” also implies a conception of painting as understood as the creation of scenic illusion, fantastic mimesis.

If we recall that the *grottesche* were viewed as embodiments of the imaginative processes which underlay painting (as in Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana*), to call them the “dream of painting” suggests their lack of distinction between the fantasies from which the artist invents and the regression as the fantasy combines and transforms artistic ‘ideas’, produced by imaginative processes. In this light, the quotations to contemporary artistic types, like the Michelangelesque

128 See Acidini Luchinat, *Grottesche. Le volte dipinte nella galleria degli Uffizi* (Florence: Giunti, 1999). Morel, *Grotesques*, 63–73, notes the absence of ancient models or emblematic allusions to the patron as at Caprarola, Villa D'Este or the Vatican and the sporadic conceptual organisation (allegorical or topical) which highlights the general lack of systematic iconography. Doni, *La Zucca* (Venice: Francesco Rampeazetto, 1565), 43r–43v, compares *bizzarri* and *capricci* to butterflies and smoke: “il fumo dei nostri capricci che ardono là dentro, i quali si risolvono in farfalle e in nonnulla”.

129 Vasari calls the *grottesche* “cose in aria” where we see things done with licence (“senza alcuna regola”), like a weight hanging from a fine thread (Preface to the *Vite* I, 144).

130 One detail in the Sala della Fama, shows a man in scholarly dress roasting in an egg shell turned on a spit—perhaps a pun on the motif of a figure emerging from the calyx of a flower or a vessel. See Corrado Rosini, *Dietro la moda delle grottesche. Prospero Fontana e Paolo Vitelli* (Città di Castello: Cassa di Risparmio di Città di Castello, 1986); Morel, *Grotesques*, 93–94. The vault of the loggia of the palazzina at Palazzo Vitelli, attributed to Cristofano Gherardi, or Prospero Fontana, Cesare Baglione and Paganino, has taxonomic trophies of fruit and birds; see Dacos, *Giovanni da Udine*, 10–11.



FIGURE 12.16 *Marco da Faenza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Corridor of Terazza di Saturno, 1556–57.*

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FIGURE 12.17 Giovanni Andrea Paganino, detail of *grotesche*, Stanza della Fama, Palazzo Vitelli a Sant'Egidio, Città di Castello, c. 1574.

COURTESY FONDAZIONE CASSA DI RISPARMIO DI CITTÀ DI CASTELLO. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

ignudo or the *contrapposto* figure in *grotesche* carry a disturbing hint which is distinct from the effect of *all'antica* satyrs or trophies in earlier grotesques. The quotation of such forms does not only indicate their imitation or consolidation in a repertoire of ornament, but suggests that all forms, even the most perfect and idealised, are subject to the vagaries of the fantasy where they are received.

Once the *grotesche* thematise this role as a depiction of the fantastic processes, the relation to their setting becomes generalised. They become the ubiquitous decoration of intermediary spaces, passages, antechambers, and areas within a room other than the central theatre of history painting. Even ornamental schemes which move towards more naturalistic decoration conserve the disposition of the *grotesche*, as in the Stanza degli uccelli decorated by Jacopo Zucchi (1576–77) in the Pavilion of Ferdinando de' Medici at Villa Medici, Rome.¹³¹ There is also an increasingly formulaic handling of *grotesche*

¹³¹ See Morel, *Villa Medici*, 17, 35, pls. 100–105; idem, *Grotesques*, 73; idem, *Le Parnasse astrologique*, 45–88, on the sources of the ornithology in the engravings of the Conrad Gesner's *Historia animalium* (1555) and the botany in Pier Andrea Mattioli's 1544 commentary to Dioscorides' *De materia medica*. Morel notes that while the birds are shown as



FIGURE 12.18 *Jacopo Zucchi, Stanza degli uccelli, pavilion, Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–77.*
 COURTESY ACADEMIE DE FRANCE À ROME—VILLA MÉDICIS.
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in the later Cinquecento, either simplified or enlarged and more heavily painted so that they lose their fleeting, ethereal quality and resemble decorative designs.

The collapse of frame and framed in the *grotesche* allows for development in two opposed directions. One is to empty the *grotesche* of their unsettling content by abstracting them into arabesques whose purpose is to fill a field—a tendency confirmed by subsequent developments of ornament into decorative style. The other possibility is to use the *grotesche* at the scale and in the place of history painting, as though to push before us the questions of disposition and pictorial illusion they raise. This can be done in various ways.

One way is to attempt an ever-closer synthesis of the dense patterning of *grotesche* with monumental vault decorations. In Jacopo Zucchi's decorations in the Stanzino d'Aurora in the Pavilion of Villa Medici, Rome, the *grotesche* grow in scale while his vault decorations in the Galleria Ruspoli, Palazzo Ruspoli, Rome (1586–92) agglomerate festoons, masks, trophies and multiple

Ulisse Aldrovandi recommended, in a leafy setting, this setting is not their natural habitat and plant species are non-naturalistically juxtaposed (*ibid.*, 76).

frames in an arrangement derived from the Sistine Chapel.¹³² In Bernardino Poccetti's decorations in the Salone of Palazzo Capponi, Florence (1585), *grottesche* complement grandiose *horror vacui* decorations crowding the vault.¹³³

Other combinations of features of the *grottesche* with monumental inventions include the most startling decorations of the Renaissance. One example is Parmigianino's decorations of the transept under-arch in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma (1531–40), which display the strongly coloured ground, the abstract relationship between setting and figure, the geometric disposition of decorative marine creatures and vessels, the non-naturalistic scale and the exaggerated tonal juxtapositions and the characteristic of *grottesche* in a monumental vault decoration with biblical iconography.¹³⁴ The exaggerated *linea serpentinata* becomes a figure for the turning of naturalism to an artificial, fantastic grace which pushes the limits of rhetorical expression and narrative clarity. In such exaggerated artifice, distinctions between depiction and pattern are lessened as all things become subject to decorative abstraction. This appears where we expect ornament to enhance liveliness, thus creating an artificial actuality not based on the imitation of nature. This attenuation of distinction between decorative design such as *grottesche* and figurative invention generates a sense of unease as the artist's life-giving illusions show an animation which is distinctly non-human. The vault decorations might be described as an essay in merging the decorative license of *grottesche* with the concept of ornament as qualitative enhancement, thus restoring the role of efficacy and affect absent from the miniature grotesques.

Salviati's play with the relation of history painting and *grottesche* works to a greater degree with the monumentalizing of the latter.¹³⁵ His three fresco cycles in the Sala di Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio (1543–45), Sala dei Fasti Farnesi, Palazzo Farnese (begun c. 1552) and the neighbouring Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti (c. 1553–54) all develop the overlay of illusionist decorations, in the manner exhibited by Sala di Costantino and Sala Paolina. To a greater degree than these or similar schemes, such as the Sala dei Cento Giorni, Salviati creates puzzling relationships between the various decorative registers, so that the viewer is

132 Enlarged figures in *grottesche* appear also in the decorations of Cesare Baglione at Rocca Meli Lupi, Soragna or Castello Sforza di Santa Fiore at Torrechiara (Parma); see Morel, *Grotesques*, 105, 110–113, 143–45.

133 Poccetti also decorated the three-chamber Grotta Grande in Boboli gardens, where the ascent from chaos to form (Venus) appears within the grotto itself.

134 On Parmigianino's numerous studies for the project, see Popham's *Catalogue* I, 22–25; III, pls. 312–44, esp. pl. 314, where the canephore nymphs resemble closely *grottesche* motifs.

135 Salviati executes elegant *grottesche* in the Chapel of the Margrave of Brandenburg in Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome (1549–50), where architectural fantasies and artefacts float on a coloured ground, framing the image of the patron.



FIGURE 12.19 *Jacopo Zucchi, Stanzino d'Aurora, pavilion, Villa Medici, Rome, 1576–77.*
COURTESY ACADEMIE DE FRANCE À ROME—VILLA MÉDICIS.
PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

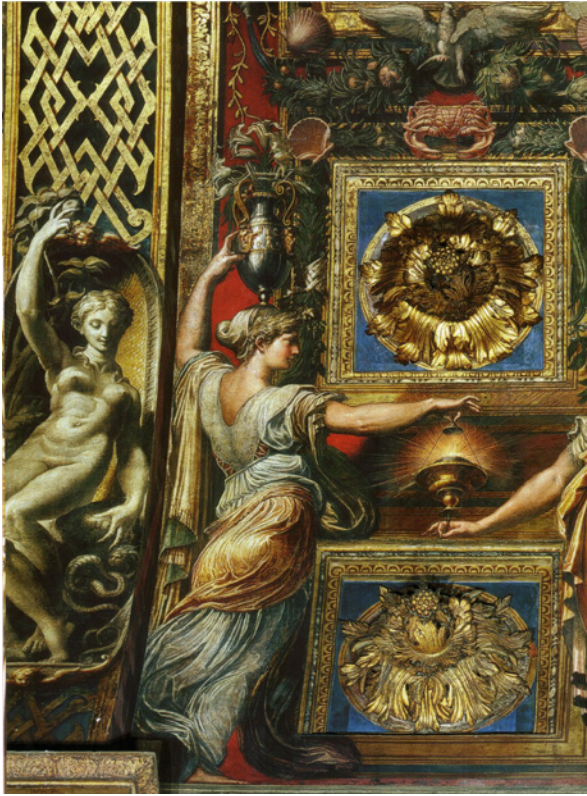


FIGURE 12.20 *Parmigianino, transept arch, Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma, 1531–40.*

COURTESY ORDINE COSTANTINIANO DI SAN GIORGIO. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

challenged to find a visual or iconographic totality in the decorations. These schemes are fictive galleries where diverse elements appear and overlay one another.

Salviati's *Triumph of Furius Camillus* in the Sala di Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio also makes multiple references to symbols and hieroglyphs.¹³⁶ In Salviati's triumphal images every detail is enriched and varied to the greatest possible

¹³⁶ Vasari in his *Life of Salviati*, *Vite* v, 522, remarked on the "Egyptian" character of the decorations, most obvious in the images of Phanes and Hecate and Arno below a sphinx. Melinda Schlitt, *Francesco Salviati and the Rhetoric of Style* (Ann Arbor: UMI dissertation service, 1991), 209, reads the sphinx in reference to discussions of the "Egyptian" origins of Etruscan by Florentine scholars like Giambullari and Gelli in the 1540s, thus promulgating

degree, so that each thing in the decoration exhibits elaboration and abundance.¹³⁷ What this kind of artistic invention shares with topics-based literary theory is the way that each object can be opened out and varied and each particular can be amplified and adorned. A topical approach to invention encouraged a writer or artist to discover all that is 'in' a theme, thereby exalting amplification; the style appropriate to such invention, as Speroni says, will involve cultivation of *copia* and ornament through the whole representational surface.¹³⁸ In the Sala di Udienza the illusionistic decorations do not suggest a symmetrical architectural disposition but vary from wall to wall, displaying an array of niches, cartouches, triumphs, *basamenti*, reliefs and painted architecture. At each level, the ornament is increased by multiplication of detail, adding levels, materials, colour and diversity of shape. Vasari's evocation of ornament carried into every detail is realised here as the visual *copia* generated by the triumphal theme is elaborated to the point of excess.

The triumphal theme reappears in the Sala dei Fasti Farnese and again the accretion of detail appropriate to triumph is rendered in a manner which is playful, metamorphic and teases the viewer with the instability of the visual overload—in short, which draws close to grotesque-work.¹³⁹ Where the Palazzo Vecchio decorations played with the continuation of ornamental 'enlivening' at every level and in every detail, the Farnese decorations play with superimposition and regress of frames. The interplay of tapestries and enthroned popes in niches is indebted to the Sala di Costantino but the encomiastic history scheme is animated by a sense of play and fantasy. Thus the figure of Ranuccio Farnese receives arms from putti who fly in the tapestry above, showing Venus examining weapons forged by Vulcan; as Hall notes, the play between the two levels of faux decoration (statue and tapestry) conveys the poetic nature of

the origins of Tuscan in sacred, hieroglyphic speech, distinct from Latin. Schlitt suggests that Valeriano may have been consulted about the inventions (*ibid.*, 136).

137 Vasari, *Vite* V, 533 calls Salviati "abondante e copiosissimo nell'invenzione di tutte le cose e universale in tutte le parti della pittura" and praises him repeatedly for his *grazia*. Caro called him "così poeta come pittore", quoted in *Salviati e la bella maniera*, (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2001), 25.

138 Speroni, *Sopra Virgilio*. Raffaello Borghini's *Il riposo* illustrates this topic invention: "I would term 'invention' the figuration of the four seasons, not by gods, as the ancients did, but by the accidents of each season" ("Io chiamerei invenzione il figurare le quattro stagioni dell'anno non con figure degli Dei, come fecero gli antichi, ma secondo gli accidenti che ciascuna stagione potrà seco"). The passage is quoted in *La bella maniera*, 74, in discussion of Salviati's tapestry designs showing the seasons, modelled on the Chigi Chapel.

139 On the Sala dei Fasti Farnesi, see Kliemann, *Gesta Dipinte*, 51–55; Salviati decorated the long walls, the cycle being completed by Taddeo and then Federico Zuccari.



FIGURE 12.21 *Francesco Savinati, Triumph of Furius Camillus, Sala di Udienza, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, 1543–45.*

COURTESY MUSEI CIVICI FIORENTINI, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



FIGURE 12.22 *Francesco Savinati, Sala dei Fasti Farnesi, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, 1552.*

COURTESY FRENCH EMBASSY IN ITALY. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

the comparison of Ranuccio to Aeneas.¹⁴⁰ Even such decorative details as the festoons in the frieze are subject to playful fantasy—Salviati takes the heavy, blooming festoons of the Sala di Psiche in the Farnesina but exaggerates them so that they swell beyond maturity to the verge of corruption and mingles them with the wilting grasses of contemporary *grotesche*. The multitude of figurations in the Sala include numerous suspended images—tapestries, small paintings, swags, recalling the plethora of pendant objects in *grotesche*. The scheme is held together by its stylistic unity, not least by its harmonious, artificial colouring, but one is made aware that detail within it has been the object of adornment in the way that Caro conceived of each metaphor in his poem as a masked figure, transfigured from normal use to enact a role within the poem. The overall scheme is clear enough but each detail has been ornamented and elaborated in a way that advertises the fantasy and skill of the artist.

The gallery aspect of the Farnese decorations moves them away from the conceit of perspectival decorations as an opening onto nature. We see a closed space covered, not a window onto the heavens, a point emphasised in the festoons which are not the fresh fruits of the pergola but tired vegetation revealed in a pallid indoor light. The decorated room as a closed space of artifice is taken to its extreme point of development in Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, where Salviati goes deeper into accommodation of the *grotesche* with painted perspectives.¹⁴¹ In these decorations the illusion of a coherent architecture is abandoned to give sudden juxtapositions between the painted columns and friezes which frame perspectival scenes, and a miscellany of emblematic-allegorical figurations against a void background characteristic of grotesques.¹⁴² In magnifying the grotesques to the scale of history painting, Salviati raises the question of how we read their allegorical configurations, and the implications of detaching allegory from narrative. If Salviati's elaborate play with levels and juxtaposition of framing points to the possibility for a regress of perspectival images, with one arbitrarily framing another, the removal of these illusions discloses the void black background we see at Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, unique in Renaissance palace decoration.

These frescoes exploit the problematic questions thrown up by *grotesche*, and turn these questions to the grand enterprise of Renaissance history painting. He points to the strain between the requirements of visual ordering and

¹⁴⁰ Hall, *After Raphael*, 165.

¹⁴¹ See Kliemann, *Italian Frescoes*, 386–99.

¹⁴² On Cardinal Ricci's collections of oriental artworks, some of which appear in the decorations, see Hall, *After Raphael*, 162–64.



FIGURE 12.23 *Francesco Salviati, Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, Rome, Sala Mappamundi, 1553–54.*
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the coherence or legibility of content.¹⁴³ The lack of an end in the *grotesche* and their suspension across a blank space appear at Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti on an epic scale, with the disturbing implication that there is no end or no grounding to the illusions of art. In the light of the fantastic origin of all the painter's illusions, the use of perspective as the vehicle of history painting may be viewed critically as a stylistic convention, elevated to the level of a conceptual theatre that can generate models of idealised artifice. Salviati sees that the *grotesche* exhibit the complexities involved by a conception of painting as deeply engaged with the various developments of fantastic invention or "fantastic mimesis" as mid-century Mannerism had become. If Barbaro identified the *grotesche* with sophistry, Salviati uses them ingeniously to question the relation or access to truth of an assemblage or arrangement of figurative images.¹⁴⁴ This questioning reaches beyond the conceptual validity of the perspectival theatre to touch on the deeper issue of the relation between our

¹⁴³ See *ibid.*, on the play between extruding painted architecture and recessive projections.

¹⁴⁴ Ossola, *Autunno*, 195, notes that Aldrovandi in *Avvertimenti al Ill.mo Cardinal Paleotti sopra alcuni capitoli della Pittura* (Bologna, Ms.b. 244, Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna, repr. TA 11, 516–17) quotes Plato's allusion to *tragelaphoi* (fantastic goat-stags) in *Republic* 6, 488a, as evidence for Plato's awareness of the *grotesche* in art. The Platonic passage describes



FIGURE 12.24 *Francesco Salviati, Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti, Rome, Sala Mappamundi, detail of Kairos.*

COURTESY ROBERT DE BALKANY/SOCIETÀ GENERALE IMMOBILIARE
ITALIA. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

mental processes of aggregation, combination and metaphoric transformation and the reshaping of our physical settings by our illusionist representations.

Throughout this chapter we have argued that in the *grotesche*, ornament passes from something which discloses limits and makes appearance possible to a depiction of processes of invention, derived from psychological processes. The semi-articulate character of ornament which enabled it to mediate between the formless and form here becomes an essential yet imperfect stage in a rational design process, in the territory between sensual apprehension and the formation of idealised forms. Following this, the 'field' of the *grotesche* is the unlimited ground of the fantasy. What has disintegrated here is the distinction between a framing rhythm which provides the conditions for things to appear, and what comes into appearance—in the *grotesche* what appears is simultaneously what frames. The formal conditions for framing (symmetry, alternation) become the pretext for outrageous metamorphic distortions. The collapse threatened by grotesquework is simultaneously a descent into unlikeness and a fall into reiterated metamorphoses as a loss of differentiation.

The *grotesche* mark a turning point in the conception of ornament, which affects more generally pictorial style and architectural decoration. As history painting becomes clarified in composition or colour with the Carracci, the role of ornament as enhancing quality, imparting grace and liveliness, becomes diffused in generalised conceptions of elevated, idealised style. The grace and liveliness of ornament as frame transmutes into field-filling decoration or becomes subordinate to a décor conceived as a complex whole played out by its parts, a "concord of correspondences", in Ligorio's words. We see the latter in Baroque deployment of ornament, where it functions in a mediation or a manifold representation of a concept. In the complex unity of Baroque churches it is difficult to discern the pre-metaphysical ordering or figurative dialectics which appears in earlier forms of framing. Instead, ornament is integral to the complex, concerted mediation of the total space.

The cost of advancing the sphere of ornament in the *grotesche* to contain all that is or can be imagined is the vitiation of moral and narrative meaning in the things depicted—and hence the denigration of ornament into a kind of empty play. This emerges clearly in eighteenth century versions of *grotesche*, as in the vault of the gallery of Palazzo Doria Pamphili, Rome, lovely in colour and form and vacuous in possible meaning. Such cases of visual delight exemplify notions of "free beauty", free from moral content—and in such freedom lies the potential for application to all objects within a visual field, regardless of use or end.

the situation of the philosopher in the state, whose condition is such that Socrates must illustrate it by bringing many things together.

Conclusion

The Composite Work of Art in the Late Renaissance

We have argued that ornament is concerned with making us see things as wholes, or in their relation to wholes. We have seen that it does this by creating borders or frames, by showing things in the 'light' of their praise or perfection, or by mediating between particulars and the whole. When framing becomes over-elaborated, art becomes self-referential; this happens in the Casino of Pius IV, where the reworking of hexaemeral allegory succumbs to the self-related welter of analogy exhibited in grotesque-work. We also suggested Humanist idealisation of antiquity placed heavy reliance on ornaments and their capacity to create contexts of historical meaning, so that the ornaments became a source of excellence, rather than illuminating it.

With painter's perspective, the visual conditions of mediation become a precondition for the construction of the image, so that ornament moves 'within' it, in figural liveliness, grace and colour, which can be viewed as relations within the totality of the image. Thus conceived, ornament becomes an affective stylistic quality whose association with universality reflects the synthetic character of art, which idealises its material or synthesises other arts into a composite form.

Such synthetic artifice appears in the literary debates about universal and composite genres and the stylistic qualities they "contain" (often indebted to Hermogenes), in decorative cycles and in multi-media theatricals, like the dramatic spectacles of the late Cinquecento. The cosmic character of theatre becomes in late Renaissance discussions the content of a structure where relations between the arts are worked out. In Francesco Patrizi's reconstruction of ancient theatre in *La Deca istoriale* and in the documents related to the performance of *Oedipus* in the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, the unity of speech, song, harmony, dance and scene is an expression of an underlying composite theoretical unity. However, this 'cosmic' ornate spectacle is becoming a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total artwork which overpowers its relation to the reality in which it purportedly participates. This is exemplified in the 1589 Florentine *intermedi*, where the theme of *harmonia mundi* becomes a content performed by means of an overarching structure of artifice which exists to fabricate wonders. The cosmic underpinning of music itself would become an object of critique, as cosmology and astronomy abandon the Pythagorean-Ptolemaic model and as music theory turns its attention to the *affetti*, whose 'theory' lies in the psychology of the passions.



FIGURE 13.1 *Annibale and Agostino Carracci and workshop, Galleria Farnese, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, 1597–1608.*
COURTESY FRENCH EMBASSY IN ITALY. PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Finally, Annibale Carracci's decorations in the Galleria of Palazzo Farnese, Rome (1597–1608) similarly show this tendency to synthetic unity in treatment of ornamental framing.¹ They echo brilliantly the interplay of materials and

1 Amongst the extensive bibliography on the Galleria, see Kliemann, *Italian Frescoes* 452–75; Clare Robertson, *The Invention of Annibale Carracci* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2009); Charles Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci. The Farnese Gallery* (New York: George Brazillier, 1995); idem, “‘Et Nos Cedamus Amori’: Observations on the Farnese Gallery”, *Art Bulletin* 50, 4 (Dec. 1968), 363–374; idem, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*; Donald Posner, *Annibale Carracci: A study in the reform of Italian painting around 1590* (London: Phaidon, 1971); *Les Carrache et les décors profanes: Actes du Colloque organisé par l'École Française de Rome, 2–4 octobre 1986* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1988), especially Philippe Morel, “Le système décoratif de la Galerie Farnese: observation sur les limites de la représentation”, 115–48; G. Briganti. A. Chastel and R. Zapperi, *Gli amori degli dei. Nuove indagini sulla Galleria Farnese* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1987); Clare Robertson, “Ars vincit omnia: the Farnese Gallery and Cinquecento ideas about art”, *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 102, 1 (1990), 7–41; Stefano Colonna, *La Galleria dei Carracci in Palazzo Farnese*

artworks in illusionist perspectival decoration but show the complexity of elements unified stylistically, in a manner which both exhibits its unity and its range of allusions to other things. The framing scheme is about the painter's command of visual organisation and a synthetic unified style, which points to and away from itself. Variety of allusions and elaborate levels of framing here become the content conveyed by the unified style; the structures of mediation are presented as objects of aesthetic delight.² Style becomes the vehicle of content, and simultaneously proclaims itself overall as ornate. Frames here show the embellishment of invention but cease to serve non-aesthetic requirements of ordering; visual-poetic ornament has become aesthetic-rhetorical—the transformation of ornament into stylistic quality which can signal dialogue between the arts but not the mediation between art and what is not art. Morel spoke of the “casuistry of ornament” in the sleight of hand used to link various levels of illusion in the Galleria Farnese.³ On similar lines, Sandström argues that once the images ‘disclosed’ through illusionist architecture are depicted as objects, no deity appears in the space of the false architecture:

instead, the picture becomes the mirror in which the human being can gaze on the god with impunity—whether the god is depicted on tapestry, on medallions, false reliefs or painted areas, or as a picture on the sky of the apsidal vault.⁴

The epic loves of the gods in the Galleria Farnese has also been likened to Marino's *Adonis* (1623), which vaunted itself as a new genre, a lyric-heroic synthesis, which treated idle pleasures on an epic scale.⁵ Such a synthetic

a Roma. Eros, Anteros, Età dell'Oro, Bollettino Telematico dell'Arte 353 (22 January 2004), <http://www.bta.it/txt/ao/03/btao0353.html>, retrieved 6 August 2008. For an overview of the recent studies on the Galleria, see Roberto Zapperi, “Annibale Carracci a Palazzo Farnese: Studi Recenti”, *Bollettino d'arte*, April–June 2009, 141–48. The contested questions of whether the decoration represented an allegory of sacred love triumphant over human love, as Bellori claimed, and whether it celebrated the wedding of Ranuccio Farnese and Margherita Aldobrandini, is beyond the brief note here.

2 On the ‘eclecticism’ of Carracci, see Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, 1947 (repr. Westport, CT: Greenwood 1971), esp. 205–12; Dempsey, *Beginnings*, xvi, 60–65 et passim.

3 Philippe Morel, “Le système décoratif de la Galerie Farnese”, 120.

4 Sandström, *Levels*, 186.

5 Dempsey, *Farnese Gallery*, 23; see also Marc Fumaroli, “La *Galeria* di Marino et la *Galerie Farnèse*”: Epigrammes et oeuvres d'art profanes vers 1600”, in *Les Carrache et les décors profanes*, 163–82; Elizabeth Cropper, “The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio”, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991), 193–212.

genre, which rendered the trivial monumental, suggests a perversion of Tasso's universal decorum, whereby base details within epic are ennobled by the grandeur of the genre.

The synthetic tendency which is the counterpart of this illusionism appears in the writings of Carracci's supporter, Gian Pietro Bellori, who invokes *Orator* I.9 in his account of "l'idea, overo dea della pittura e della scoltura" in *L'Idea del pittore, dello scultore e dell'architetto* (1672), identifying the passage with Zeuxis' *Helen* as contemplation of the idea of beauty and with Raphael's comments on the *Galatea*.⁶ Bellori's identification of the Platonic idea as artistic idealisation exists alongside a deformation of the eikastic-fantastic mimesis discussion in *Sophist*; like Mazzoni and Comanini in the Cinquecento, Bellori identifies eikastic imitation with the reprehensible naturalism which fails to idealise defects of nature. Those painters who create an *idea* through imitation of the defects of their predecessors illustrate Plato's association of artists (presumably practitioners of fantastic mimesis) with Sophists who base themselves "not in truth but in the false phantasms of opinion".

These are brief comments; not so much an end as a signal to a *terminus ad quem*. The subsequent career of ornament as decorative glory and historicist motif lies beyond this work. The aim of the book has been to attempt a restoration to ornament of theoretical dignity—or at least to outline some lines of reflection which can lead to that end. I have concentrated on the Renaissance as a crucial period which sees a diversification and a change in modes of conceiving ornament. I have argued that attempts to reconcile inherited ideas, often gathered around hexaemeral themes, their Platonic-Stoic sources and their allegorical development, with a recovered classical rhetorical tradition led ultimately to the weakening of the former. The attenuation of the allegorical tradition visible in such works as Ripa's *Iconologia* and the manuals of mythography is one sign of this. The ancient tension between cosmic themes and sophistry has also been a continuous presence in the argument, and points to the need for deeper studies of the sophistic tradition in Renaissance art and its literature. Even in a work like Zuccari's *Idea* which strives to articulate a philosophical art theory, sophistry appears in the praise of painting for its imitation of all things and the praise of Proteus, ancient type for the sophist, as a personification of painting.

6 On the *Idea della Bellezza*, c. 1632, of Giovanni Battista Agucchi as a forerunner of Bellori, see Mahon, *Studies*.

Beyond the Renaissance

The Renaissance is important in the story of ornament for the quality and richness of its production and for the shifts for which I have argued. However, I would hope that the themes treated here could be developed beyond the historical and geographical limits of this study. Where ornament has attracted attention in recent years, it has often been related to a renewed, post-modern interest in historicism or in rhetoric. It has appeared in post-modern readings of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, as in Derrida's reflections on the parergon in *The Truth in Painting*.⁷ One deep theme of this book has been to insist that ornament should take us beyond a rhetorical conception of art or an aesthetic relation to it. Another is that one difficulty we have in reflecting on the nature and significance of ornament is related to its loss of moral significance, apparent in Kant's identification of *pulchritudo vaga* with the lack of purposiveness, or a relation to an end.

We still live with the consequences of the concept of ornament which the Renaissance recovered from the sophistic and rhetorical traditions: the use of ornament for purposes of persuasion and enticement, its cosmetic relation to what is adorned and the mimicking of historical style which is so closely linked to this cosmetic application. Alongside such deployment goes the exhibition of ornament as a production of the fantasy—an invitation to a kind of licensed dreaming in a historicist play-world. The most extensive Renaissance display of this approach to ornament is displayed by the *grotesche* which became established as a ubiquitous decorative style, historicising and closely linked to the theatrical illusion of painted architectural perspectives. As we saw, the *grotesche* develop with the interest in the display of antique fragments and then turn these things into fantasies. This view of ornament as an elaboration of fantasies of forms has endured to the present.

Throughout the history of artistic criticism, claims for the philosophical realism of art have been in tension with the celebration of illusion. I have argued that as ornament becomes associated with style, it becomes subject to critique at that level. Ornament changes as what had been an implicit metaphysical background to conceptions of art becomes translated into an explicit rhetorical discourse. Through such developments as the rhetorical simplification of metaphysical form into discussions of types or models for imitation, ornament loses its participation in wholeness becoming instead a manifestation or quality of style that is ultimately emancipated from moral content (decorative art).

7 On Kant's hostility to rhetoric and Enlightenment aesthetics as a substitute for a rhetorical conception of art, see Eck, *Classical Rhetoric*, 203.

Thus the proportioning of contraries or the plenitude of species turns into a stylistic play of oppositions or the hylomorphic drama of the grotto, where the licensed, playful context can undermine the more serious project of artistically embodied speculation. The identification of ornament with style (in particular: selection of historical style as a cosmetic choice) detaches it from its 'cosmic' character. It also vitiates the role of framing, which becomes the assemblage of an illusionist décor. This is distinct from the role of framing ornament suggested in the first chapter of the book as providing a context for the representation of appearances, by figuring the rhythmic alternation of contraries and the appearance and disappearance of qualities.

In the Romantic period, after ornament has lost its participation in the cosmic, we find literary descriptions of ornate spaces which take their inhabitants into an enchanted realm, full of reverie and incredible happenings.⁸ Such literature generally takes the form of gothic tales, where the fantasy is given full play over historical detail or the creation of historicist settings.⁹ In the present, the link between historicist, fanciful ornament and persuasion appears absolute. Ornament has not disappeared in our age; but it appears in the forms which are presented as our modes of communal participation: in the various branches of consumerism. Ornament remains what creates our habitat, but this habitat is no longer conceived as the *exornatio mundi*; the flux of generated being has been substituted by the ephemeral, constantly renewed stream of consumer objects with which we fashion our personal environments. The passage from the cosmic to the cosmetic is paralleled by the shift from species to the specious.¹⁰ If the identification of ornament with style and historicism in the Renaissance went with a theatrical paradigm for cultural design, the décor of contemporary sales places is a pastiche, a fantasy image of an other-place which can be re-styled at whim. The overtly illusory, cosmetic character of such decoration acts as mirror for the fake character of the experience concocted in which the consumer does not merely buy a product but a relation

8 See for example Poe's *Ligeia* or Gautier's *Omphale ou la Tapisserie Amoreuse* (1834), set in a Rococo pavilion, where a nymph steps down from a tapestry to seduce the sleeper in the room.

9 Baudelaire, *Les paradis artificiels* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 101, likens the man who takes drugs to a madman who substitutes a painted version of his environment for the environment. Again the role of fantasy is of primary importance here.

10 See Alexis de Tocqueville's acute observation that the hypocrisy of luxury belongs to the ages of democracy, in *Democracy in America*, (1835–40), translated George Lawrence (New York, Harper and Row, rev. ed. 1966), 434.

which contains a phoney element. The ornament lies in the cosmetic relation, not just in the styling.

The wholeness revealed by ornament concerns structures of communal participation, and it will appear wherever cultures create these structures. In the early material under discussion here, these structures first concerned universal ordering and the creation of ritual or ceremonial environments where the manifestation of the universal in the human was mimed. The loss of dance as communal, festival and mimetic activity is one example of the loss of ornament in shaping contexts in which we showed our participation in the beauty of universal ordering. Such environments were most characteristically spaces where religious ritual and government took place. As communal participation becomes increasingly conceived as a programmatic engagement with history, ornament becomes a manifestation of historicism. This tendency starts in the Renaissance and culminates in the nineteenth century.

Amongst the various discourses which gave ornament meaning—as *kosmos* or *exornatio mundi* or praise—it seems that what is left of ornament is sophistry and the cosmetic or illusory. In recompense to this gloomy diagnosis, we can see why the deepened historical discussion about ornament is worthwhile—we can use this awareness to articulate a critique of the cosmetic which provides a space for positive thinking about the social role of decoration. In broader terms, we can understand that ornament is what relates the beautiful to the world or context which gives the beautiful meaning or value—and see it as a precious, ever-present indicator of the role which beauty serves in society.

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Index of Names

- Achilles 223n
 Shield of Achilles 31, 63, 102n
- Acidini Luchinat, Cristina 524, 528n, 530
- Actaeon 557n
- Addison, Joseph 423n
- Adonis 255n, 346n, 558, 576n
- Aegle 559
- Aeschylus 322
 Oresteia 322n
- Aesculapius 558n, 559n
- Aëtius 25
- Agalophon 176
- Agatharcus 322
- Agathias Scholasticus 88
- Agricola, Rudolph 234, 236–37, 239, 240n, 241n, 242n, 248, 250
- Agrippa, Cornelius, *De occulta philosophia* 54, 505n
- Agucchi, Giovanni Battista 595n
- Alan of Lille 33, 58, 60–62, 305, 347n, 405, 415
 Anticlaudianus 47n, 58n, 60–62, 63n, 65n, 405
 De planctu naturae 33, 47n, 61–63, 208n, 211n, 213n, 347n
- Alberti, Cherubino 489
- Alberti, Leandro 346n
- Alberti, Leon Battista 13, 173, 178, 184, 198, 209, 217, 255, 260, 262n, 274, 314n, 317, 319–21, 323, 354n27, 354n29, 357, 373, 379, 407, 431, 460, 483, 484, 504, 508n
 De pictura/ Della pittura 194, 231, 247n, 285, 288, 308, 309–11, 319, 503
 De re aedificatoria 48, 173–75, 184–94, 347n, 354n, 375n, 379n, 416
 De statua 503, 504n
 Il libro della famiglia 187n
 Intercoenales 354n
 Momus 184n
 Profugiorum ab aerumna libri 218, 405
- Alberti, Romano 282, 299, 300n82, 300n84
- Albinus, see also Alcinous 38
- Albucius 219
- Alciati, Andrea 219, 232, 409, 411–14, 416–17, 424n
 Emblemata 232, 409, 412–18, 420n, 424n, 432
- Alcimus Avitus 254
- Alcinous, *Handbook of Platonism* (*Didaskalikos*), see also Albinus 29n, 38, 215n, 264n
- Alcinous, palace and gardens of 156
- Aldrovandi, Ulisse 309n, 582n, 589n
- Aleardi, Francesco 177n, 453n, 454n
- Alexander of Aphrodisias 502n
- Alexander the Great 121n, 125n, 126–27, 129, 359n, 361n, 433n
- Alexander of Hales 292n
- Alexander Polyhistor 26n
- Alexander VI, pope (Rodrigo Borgia) 381
- Al-farabi 430n
- Alhazen 310, 316n, 317, 319
 Optics 4n, 287, 314
- Alighieri, Dante, see Dante
- Al-Kindi 314
- Amalthea 557n
- Ambrose 48n
 Hexaameron 41n, 43–45, 50, 57, 64n, 384, 507n
- Ammannati, Bartolommeo 395, 396n, 397–98, 439n
- Ammianus Marcellinus 104n, 125n, 131
- Ammirato, Scipione, *Il Rota* 406–7, 421n, 425–26, 429n
- Ammonius 195n
- Anaxagoras 25, 28
- Anaximander 24–25
- Andrea, Zoan 149, 512n, 515
- Andreas Trapezuntius 461
- Andromeda 557n
- Annius of Viterbo 419n, 423n
- Anthony Abbot 563n
- Antiochus of Ascalon 38
- Antiochus Epiphanes 129
- Antisthenes 73
- Antonius (Marcus Antonius Orator) 108, 116–17
- Apelles 93, 127n, 176, 307n, 431n

- Aphrodite, see also Venus 256, 271n, 348
 Apollo 31n, 37n, 120n, 124n, 125n, 126n, 152n,
 201n, 283n, 335, 370n, 373, 419n, 524n,
 535n, 556, 558, 559, 578
 Apollonio di Giovanni 364n, 365nn49–50
 Apollonius, *Argonautica* 121
 Apostolius Byzantinus 408
 Appian, *Roman History (Romica)* 130, 132n,
 458n
 Apuleius 59n, 104n, 105, 345n, 347–48, 358,
 419
De deo Socratis 54n, 105
De mundo 105n, 276n
Golden Ass 347
 Aquinas, Thomas 57n, 187n, 191, 424
Quaestiones quodlibetales 58n
Summa contra Gentiles 290n
Summa Theologiae 1, 47, 49, 80, 191
 Aragona, Isabella d' 367n
 Araldi, Alessandro 531n, 572
 Archimedes 322
 Arcimboldo, Giuseppe 301, 306, 341n, 570n,
 577n
 Aretino, Pietro 262n, 297n, 526n
 Argyropoulos, Johannes 221n, 461n
 Ariadne 31n, 359n, 372
 Ariosto, Ludovico 199, 228, 249, 255, 334n,
 379n, 575
Orlando Furioso 189n, 229, 249, 256–57,
 297n, 429n, 575n, 576n
 Aristides, *Panathenaic Oration* 166, 176–77,
 180–82
 Aristotle 4, 24, 34n, 35–36, 38, 40, 45n, 49,
 79–84, 85, 99, 116–17, 135, 150, 176, 182n,
 183n, 184n, 221, 234n, 235, 239, 244,
 247n, 285, 326, 407, 427, 430n, 574
Categories 81, 183n
De anima 4n, 145, 501
De generatione et corruptione 34n, 35
De insomnis 502
De motu animalium 4n, 288
De partibus animalium 4n, 79
De philosophia 40n, 44n, 54n
Metaphysics 24n, 26, 35–36, 72n,
 73nn26–27, 83, 134–35
Meteorologia 304n
Nicomachean Ethics 80–81, 83, 92, 187, 189
Physics 24n, 34n, 36n, 84, 416n
Poetics 216, 230, 241, 279, 289–90, 322n,
 341n, 421n
Politics 187
Rhetoric 29n, 67, 69n, 70n, 79–83, 85–86,
 90, 100, 101n, 104n, 112, 117, 131, 135n, 221,
 236n, 241, 249n, 423n
Sophistical Refutations 239n
Topica
 Pseudo-Aristotle
De cosmo 276n
Oeconomia 175
On Melissus, Xenophanes and Gorgias
 72n
 Armenini, Giovanni Battista 262n, 284, 538n
De'veri precetti della pittura 306, 472,
 494n, 509, 534n, 541, 576–77
 Aspertini, Amico 475, 518
 Athena 107n, 127, 181, 224, 574n
 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 56n, 127, 129,
 359, 407n
 Attis 558n
 Augustine 39n, 45n, 50, 168–69, 272n, 276,
 369–70, 371
City of God 38, 48n, 276n
Confessions 507n
De doctrina christiana 58n, 66n, 104n,
 460n
De genesi ad litteram 41n, 43n, 47
De immortalitate animae 168n
De musica 168n
De ordine 58n, 138n, 163, 168n
De pulchro et apto 48
De trinitate 315
De utilitate credendi 57n
De vera religione 41n
Ennaratio ad psalmes 276n
Epistulae 267n, 276n
Soliloquies 168n
 Augustus (Octavian) 89n, 123n, 124n, 125n,
 126n, 127n, 131, 140n, 152n, 153n, 154n,
 318, 372n
 Aulus Gellius, *Attic nights* 222, 226n, 274n
 Aurora 435n, 557n, 558, 582, 584
 Ausonius 158, 218, 460, 526n
 Averroes 200n, 221, 282n
 Avicenna 4, 427n, 501

- Bacchus, see also Dionysus, triumph 350,
352, 359n, 360, 373n, 558n
- Bachiacca (Francesco d'Ubertino Verdi) 545n
- Bacon, Francis 234n, 416
- Bacon, Roger 288n, 310, 313n, 314, 315n, 316,
319, 320nn180–81
- Baglione, Cesare 500n, 579n, 583n
- Baldini, Baccio (engraver) 480
- Baldini, Baccio (author), *Discorso sopra la
mascherata* 440n
- Baldinucci, Filippo 500
- Baldinovetti, Alessio 462
- Baraballo, Cosimo 378n
- Barbaro, Daniele 323, 574, 579, 589
Commentaries on Vitruvius (1 dieci libri)
185n, 198n, 243n, 279n, 321n, 323, 385,
483, 571
Della eloquenza 243n, 299n
La pratica della prospettiva 322n
- Barbaro, Ermolao 192
- Bardi, Giovanni de' 332, 333n, 334nn220–21,
336
- Bargagli, Girolamo 334n
- Bargagli, Scipione 421n51, 421n54, 425n,
426n, 427
- Barkan, Leonard 16, 89n, 262, 285, 348n,
381n, 383, 384, 407, 442, 445n, 452n21,
452n24, 453n, 454n, 465n, 479n, 544n
- Barocchi, Federico 562
- Baronino, Bartolomeo 470
- Baron, Hans 182, 183n
- Bartlett Giamatti, A. 254, 257n
- Bartoli, Daniello 521
- Basil, *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* 43–44,
48n, 57, 461
- Baudelaire, Charles 597n
- Beatrice 123n, 206, 256n, 347
- Bellini, Giovanni 312–13, 337, 458n, 487
- Bellini, Jacopo 350n, 392n, 443n, 448n
- Bellori, Gian Pietro 299, 306, 562n, 594n, 595
- Bembo, Pietro 205n30, 205n32, 207, 244n,
251, 261, 263, 264, 268–69, 274, 316, 342,
383n, 394n, 453n, 469n, 536n
De imitatione 264
Gli Asolani 77n, 207n, 256, 261, 263n
Prosa della volgar lingua 90, 231, 267n
- Benedetto da Maiano 464
- Beni, Paulo 216
- Benivieni, Girolamo 266, 270
- Berecynthia, see also Cybele, Dea natura,
Diana of Ephesus, *magna mater* 128,
378n, 557n
- Bernard of Clairvaux 48n, 123n, 341
- Berni, Francesco 298, 576–77
- Béroalde de Verville, François 357
- Beroaldo, Filippo 216–17, 223, 226n, 233n,
345n, 575
- Bersuire, Pierre 214, 215n
- Bertoja, Jacopo 434
- Bessarion, Basilios or Johannes, Cardinal 461
- Bèze, Théodore de 415–16
- Bibbiena (Dovizi), Bernardo, Cardinal 332,
378n, 394, 536–37
- Biermann, Veronica 186
- Biondo, Flavio 358, 369, 373, 379
Roma instaurata 358, 369, 379
Roma triumphans 358, 360n, 369–71
- Bober, Phyllis Pray 379n, 380n, 492
- Boccaccio, Giovanni 202, 204n, 252, 255,
261n, 346, 406, 408n, 431n, 440
Ameto 212
Amorosa visione 365n
Decameron 260, 345n
Genealogia deorum gentilium 65, 66,
196n, 201n, 207n, 292n
Trattatello in laude di Dante 200–1,
214n
- Bocchi, Achille 420n, 424
- Bocchi, Francesco 178, 287n, 307n
- Boethius 58, 59n, 60n, 63n, 66n, 183n, 253,
304, 406n
- Bolzoni, Lina 247–48, 249n, 429n
- Bonaventure 164, 263, 279n, 315
- Borghini, Raffalle 305n, 526n, 558n, 562n,
586n
- Borghini, Vincenzo 433n, 438, 440
- Bos, Cornelius 531n
- Botticelli, Sandro 310n, 487, 504n
Allegory of Abundance or Autumn
285–86
Birth of Venus 225n, 256
Calumny of Apelles 431–33
Primavera 210–13, 217n
- Bouchet, Jules 563n
- Bourdon, Benedetto 431n
- Bracciolini, Poggio 177n, 251, 368, 391, 406

- Bramante, Donato, see also Belvedere and San
Pietro in Montorio under Rome 318n,
326, 373, 375–76, 393n, 394, 395n, 400, 461n,
462, 474–75
- Bregno, Andrea 362n, 475, 512–14, 521
- Brescia, Giovan Antonio da 149–50, 363,
508n, 512n, 515
- Brett, David 3, 6, 7n, 28, 34n
- Brill, Paul 532n
- Bronzino, Agnolo 395n, 487
- Brunelleschi, Filippo 317, 323n
- Bruni, Leonardo 173–86, 193, 200, 201n, 218,
220, 225, 228, 237, 405, 439, 465
De interpretatione recta 175, 183, 218–20
De militia 186n
De studiis et litteris 175, 179
Dialogus ad Petrum Paulum Histriam
182n
Isagogicon moralis discipline 182, 183n
Laudatio urbis Florentiae 173–84
Life of Aristotle 183
Oratio in funere Johannis Strozze 176
Vita di Dante 183n
- Bruschi, Arnaldo 374nn88–89
- Budé, Guillaume 251, 417, 418n
- Bundy, Murray 503
- Buondelmonti, Cristoforo 384, 418
- Buontalenti, Bernardo 334–35, 485, 487,
495, 532n
- Burchiello (Domenico di Giovanni)
577nn123, 125
- Butler, Kim 380n
- Butone, Bernardino 464n
- Cacus 398
- Calamis 90
- Calcagnini, Celio 383n, 419n, 453n, 468n
- Calcidius, *Commentary on Timaeus* 35n,
36n, 43n, 45–47, 54n, 59n, 60n, 211, 212n
- Calderini, Domizio 216n, 219, 223, 224n, 226,
228
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro 247n, 275n
- Callicles 76
- Callixeinos 127
- Callimachus 87nn65–66, 120nn2–3, 220n,
229n
- Callimachus (artist) 90
- Callistratus, *Descriptions* 67, 75, 163n, 303
- Callot, Jacques 396n
- Calypso 254
- Camillo, Giulio 207, 236–37, 242–51, 258,
300, 331, 422, 429, 483–84, 572
De transmutatione 250–51
Della imitatione 243n, 244–45
Delle materie 243n
Idea del theatro 244, 249, 300n
Topica 242–4, 248n, 249
- Campano, Giannantonio 372n, 380
- Cantelmo, Sigismondo 365, 367
- Capella, Martianus, *Marriage of Philology and
Mercury* 58, 59n, 60, 64, 206n, 212n,
332n, 346, 347n
- Caplan, Harry 99
- Capodiferro, Evangelista Maddalena Fausto
di 372n, 468n
- Caravaggio, Polidoro da 472–73, 484–88, 551
Palazzo Gaddi, Palazzo Milesi, see under
Rome
- Carburici, Francesco 430
- Carl, Peter 17, 34n, 402, 549, 567
- Caro, Annibale 435, 440–41, 574, 576, 578,
586n, 588
- Carpaccio, Vittore, *Entombment* 388
- Carpo, Mario 331n, 482, 483n
- Carracci family 500n, 591
- Carracci, Agostino 334n, 335
- Carracci, Annibale 299, 333–39, 500,
593–595
Galleria Farnese, see under Rome, Palazzo
Farnese
- Cassiodorus 155, 157n, 198n, 459
- Castagno, Andrea 465
- Castelvetto, Ludovico 248, 250, 574
- Castiglione, Baldassare 90, 93n, 194, 281,
285, 288, 297n, 332, 333n, 342, 394, 466,
Cleopatra 381n
Il libro del cortegiano 13, 259–75, 316, 345,
412n, 429
Letter on Villa Madama 548, 552n
“Leo x” letter 466, 468–75, 479, 493, 535,
547
- Castriota, David 5n, 9n, 126n, 128n, 143n,
145n, 146nn88, 91, 148–49, 151nn100, 102,
152n
- Caus, Salomon de 341n
- Cellini, Benvenuto 283n, 570n
- Cencio de’ Rustici 452n
- Cennini, Cennino, *Libro dell’arte* 303, 503

- Cerceau, Jacques Androuet Du 482–83, 496
 Cesariano, Cesare 196n, 215, 328
 De architectura 191n, 195, 198n, 318–20
 Charles v 433n
 Charybdis 503n
 Chigi, Agostino 376
 Chigi Chapels, see under Rome
 Chioris 211–12, 254n
 Choricus 157
 Christ 15n, 57n, 161, 233, 254, 312, 337, 346n,
 383, 386, 388n, 464, 481, 540, 563n
 Christian, Kathleen 381n, 388n, 392n, 393n,
 406n, 452, 562n
 Chrysoloras, Manuel 163, 164n, 176–77,
 368–69, 453–54, 461
 Cicero 39, 76, 88–89, 91n, 92, 95–101, 104–8,
 135, 138, 178, 192, 219, 236, 244, 251, 253,
 255, 259n, 260n, 291, 297, 383n, 393, 414,
 430n, 507
 Academica 116n, 136, 323n
 Ad Atticum 136n
 Brutus 70, 97–98, 99n, 100n, 106n,
 108nn170–71, 122, 136, 219, 253n
 De amicitia 116n, 136
 De divinatione 116n, 505
 De finibus 107, 116n, 136–37, 368
 De inventione 117n, 235nn13, 16, 241, 262n
 De legibus 137, 198n
 De natura deorum 39–40, 43–44, 93n,
 116n, 136
 De officiis 76, 96, 111–16, 119, 179–80, 192,
 324n
 De optimo genere oratorum 97n
 De oratore 25, 26, 49, 70, 96, 97n, 100n,
 108n, 111, 116–19, 136–37, 192, 241n
 Orator 32, 74n, 82n, 83, 89, 90n, 96,
 97nn111, 113, 98n, 100nn128–29,
 101nn134, 137, 104–5, 106nn161–62, 108n,
 109nn172, 174, 156n, 166–67, 192, 216,
 219–20, 260n, 264–65, 296
 Pro Archia 203n
 Topica 117n, 135n, 235n, 236, 241
 Tusculan Disputations 116n, 138, 226n,
 261n
 Verrine orations 133, 134n
 Ciceronian, Ciceronianism, see subject
 index
 Cigoli (Ludovico Cardì) 305n, 438n
 Cimo da Conegliano 465n
 Cini, Giovan Battista 438–39
 Ciofano, Ercole 575
 Circe 254
 Circignani, Nicolò 544n
 Ciriaco d'Ancona 308, 345n, 370, 381n, 385,
 406
 Claudian 104n, 131, 154, 211n, 254, 256
 Claudius 127n
 Clement vii, pope (Giulio de'Medici) 550n
 Clement of Alexandria 44n, 57n, 222, 306
 Cleopatra 131, 372
 Clovio, Giulio 338
 Cola di Rienzo 406n, 452n
 Colonna, Francesco 345n, 347, 354, 357,
 407
 Colonna, Giovanni 367
 Colonna, Propero 381n
 Columella 149n
 Comanini, Gregorio 199n, 287, 288n, 300–2,
 306, 308n, 341n, 570n, 572, 595
 Comenius, Johann Amos 247n
 Condivi, Ascanio 265, 289
 Constantine 125, 133n, 151n, 153n, 155n,
 464n, 469, 477n
 Constantius 124n
 Constantius ii 131
 Contile, Luca 217n, 219n, 275n, 309n, 417n,
 418n, 421–24, 425n, 426
 Coomaraswamy, Ananda 21–22, 81
 Corippus 154–55, 156, 198n, 464
 Cornarius, Janus 409n
 Cornaro, Francesco 458n
 Cornutus 56
 Cortona, Pietro da 14, 500
 Correggio, Antonio Allegri da 299n, 321,
 505–7
 Cortesi, Paolo 251, 384n
 Cosimo, Piero de' 311n, 504
 Cosmas Indicopleustes 41n, 48n, 158n
 Cossa, Francesco del 196
 Costa, Lorenzo 464n
 Coulter, James 56, 229
 Crassus 116–18, 136, 138
 Crates 56
 Cratylus 73
 Crinito, Pietro 219–20, 231, 419n, 460
 Crivelli, Carlo 337n
 Cupid (Amor), see also Eros 204n, 276n,
 332n, 333n, 350, 364, 372n, 437n

- Cusanus, Nicholas (Nicholas of Cusa) 310, 514n
- Cybele, see also Berecynthia, Dea natura, Diana of Ephesus, *magna mater* 89, 92n, 127n, 128, 146n, 378, 458, 556–57, 558n
- Daedalus 252n
- Damascus 31
- Dante 58, 63n, 123n, 183n, 200–1, 204, 205n, 206, 213–14, 229n, 231, 256n, 292n, 297n, 314n, 325n, 346, 439n, 528
- Danti, Egnazio 395
- Danti, Vincenzo 80, 288–91, 296n, 297n, 492–93
- Dea natura (Diana of Ephesus), see also Berecynthia, Cybele, *magna mater* 509, 543, 565n
- Deieneira 557n
- Della Casa, Giovanni 576n
- Della Rovere, Domenico 381
Della Rovere Chapel and Palazzo di
Domenico della Rovere, see under Rome
- Demetrius, *On style* 82–83, 88, 91, 92n, 93n, 99, 102, 104, 105n, 106–7, 111n, 134
- Demetrius of Phaleron 85, 100, 104, 106, 120n
- Demetrius Poliorcetes 124n, 129
- Demosthenes 83, 89–92, 107n, 108, 119n, 407
- Dempsey, Charles 222n, 305, 510
- Denores, Giason 248n, 574
- Derrida, Jacques 7, 188n, 596
- Desiderio da Settignano 465, 467, 512
- Diana 126n, 154n, 346, 362, 372n, 557, 559n
- Diana of Ephesus, see also Berecynthia, Cybele, Dea natura, *magna mater* 509, 543, 556, 565n
- Dillon, John 38, 54n, 70n
- Dio Chrysostom 167
- Diocletian 126, 156n, 367, 468n
- Diogenes Laertius 25, 26n, 69n, 130n, 323n
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus 69, 70nn10–11, 71nn14, 20, 72, 80–83, 88–94, 96n, 98–102, 104, 106–8, 118, 140, 166, 208, 266, 290, 305n, 340
- Dionysus, see also Bacchus 31n, 33n, 126–27, 128, 129, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 146n90, 146n91, 544n
- Dionysian symposium tent and procession, see under Ptolemy II Philadelphus
- Dolce, Ludovico 242n, 249, 281–82, 288, 290, 297nn66–67, 299n, 305, 307–8, 322n, 577
- Dolfin, Giacomo 329
- Domenichino (Domenico Zampieri) 305n, 500
- Domitian 124n
- Donatello 448, 510–12
- Donatus 200n, 410n
- Doni, Anton Francesco 249, 429, 433n, 435, 509, 573, 575–77, 579n
- Dondi D'Orologio, Giovanni 452n
- Dosio, Giovanni Antonio 393
- Dracontius 254
- Du Bellay, Joachim 453
- Duca, Giacomo del 398–99
- Durandus (Guillaume Durand) 316n
- Durante, Annibale 500n
- Durante del Nero 562n
- Ebreo, Leone 268n, 273n, 315n
- Eco, Umberto 2n, 46, 48n, 49n, 52n, 83n, 187n
- Egger, Hermann 385n, 444
- Edgerton, Samuel 319, 320n
- Eleutheria 347n
- Elijah 123n
- Empedocles 24–25, 28, 35n, 266, 267n
- Ennius 203
- Ennodius 104n, 254
- Equicola, Mario 309, 367
- Erasmus, Desiderius 242n, 244, 250, 261n, 264, 354, 372n, 412, 426n, 507n
Adagia 232, 406–11, 412n, 416, 431
Ciceronianus 251–53
Convivium religiosum 383–84
De copia 91n, 101n, 231, 233–34, 237–38, 241, 405,
- Eriugena, John Scotus 1, 43n, 50, 52, 62n, 63, 165n, 191, 316, 405n
- Eros, see also Cupid 54–55, 146n
- Erspamer, Francesco 342
- Este family (Estensi) 194, 198,
Borso D'Este 196n, 197, 379
- Ercole D'Este 365n
- Ippolito D'Este 401n
- Isabella D'Este 373n, 378n, 507

- Lionello D'Este 308
 Euclid 319, 322, 326, 329
 Europa 557n
 Eurydice 348n
 Eusebius (church historian) 153, 155n, 156, 158,
 161, 163, 372n
 Eusebius (character in *Convivium religiosum*)
 383
 Evander 132n
 Evans, Joan 11
 Ezekiel 123n

 Fabius Maximus 131n, 134n
 Fabriano, Gentile da 310n, 444n, 488
 Fagiolo, Marcello 562n
 Falconetto, Giovanni Maria 16, 498–99,
 542n, 544n
 Fantuzzi, Antonio 482–83
 Farnese family, see also Paul III 398, 431,
 433, 437, 586, 588
 Farnese, Alessandro (cardinal) 398, 435, 440
 Farnese, Ranuccio 586
 Farra, Alessandro 275n, 422, 423n, 425
 Fasanini, Filippo 411–12, 416, 432
 Fauno, Lucio 371
 Federighi, Antonio 512
 Feliciano, Felice 345n, 385n, 447n
 Feltrini, Andrea di Cosimo 494n
 Festus, Sextus Pompeius 85n, 279, 347
 Fiano, Francesco da 65
 Ficino, Marsilio 38n, 50, 54, 63, 64n, 197n,
 214, 266, 290, 316n, 347n, 348n, 418,
 419n, 420, 425, 505n, 571n
El libro dell'amore 209n, 214, 222n, 262n,
 270–73, 316
 Filarete (Antonio di Pietro Averlino) 357n,
 462n, 512n
 Finiguerra, Maso 448, 450, 486
 Firenzuola, Angelo 262n, 269–70, 271n,
 272n, 273, 576n
 Flora, see also Arcimboldo 209n, 211n, 212,
 254n, 558
 Florus 132n
 Focillon, Henri 8n, 11, 500n
 Fontana, Prospero 579n
 Fornari, Simon 229n, 231n, 249
 Fra Angelico 324
 Francesco di Giorgio Martini 198n, 501n,
 512
 Franciabiagio 376n, 431n
 Frascatoro, Girolamo 77n, 226n, 291–92
 Freedberg, David 304n
 Freedberg, S.J. 287n, 477–78
 Fregoso, Antonio 257–58, 574
 Fulgentius 64, 200n, 223n, 346n
 Fulvio, Andrea 378–79, 468n
 Fumaroli, Marc 111n, 135

 Gadamer, Hans–Georg 5n, 17, 34, 174
 Gafurius, Franchinus (Gaffurio, Franchino)
 65n, 267n
 Gage, John 156, 159n, 161, 163, 304n, 308n,
 310–11, 314n, 316
 Gagliardi, Antonio 260n, 262, 263n, 265n,
 269n, 274
 Galatea 557n
 Galen 25n, 215, 291
 Gamucci, Bernardo 469n
 Garzoni, Tommaso 246
 Gast, Michiel 393n
 Gautier, Théophile 597n
 Gelli, Giovan Battista 585n
 Genga, Girolamo 328, 332–33, 394–95, 431n
 Genga, Pierleone 562
 Geoffrey of Vinsauf 61
 George of Trebizond (Trapezuntius)
 234–36, 242, 250, 461
 Gesner, Conrad 581n
 Gherardi, Cristoforo 579n
 Ghiberti, Lorenzo 310, 312–13, 314n, 317, 321,
 452n
 Ghirlandaio, Davide 462n
 Ghirlandaio, Domenico 310n, 375, 444n,
 462, 464n, 465–66, 530n
 Ghirlandaio, Ridolfo 462n, 535n
 Ghisi, Giorgio 431n
 Giambullari, Pier Francesco 585n
 Giannicola di Paolo 525n
 Gilio, Giovanni Andrea 304, 492, 493
 Giorgi, Francesco 54, 64, 242n
 Giorgione 531n
 Giotto 461n, 462, 464, 487n
 Giovanni Antonio da Brescia 149–50, 363,
 512n
 Giovanni da Cherso 562n
 Giovanni di Stefano 512
 Giovanni Pietro da Birago 512n
 Giovanni Vecchio 434

- Giovio, Paolo 378n, 421, 424–25, 428, 433, 468n, 576n
- Giraldi, Giglio or Lelio (Lilius Gyraldus) 335n, 419n
- Giraldi Cinthio, Giovanni 228, 344n, 453n
- Gombrich, Ernst 3, 10, 22n, 29n, 211n, 325, 373, 383n, 421n, 456n
- Gonzaga family 360, 362n, 365n
- Elisabetta Gonzaga 268
- Eleonora Gonzaga 268, 394n
- Federico II Gonzaga 507n
- Francesco Gonzaga 362n
- Gorgias 34n, 55, 68–72, 74, 78, 91, 92n, 104–5, 168, 254, 257, 503n
- Goritz, Johannes 380nn107–8,
- Grabar, André 124n
- Grabar, Oleg 6, 7n, 8n, 10n, 13n, 54, 190n
- Graces (*Charites*) 31, 210, 212, 217, 224, 381n, 433n, 554n, 555, 563, 565n
- Grácian, Balthasar 247n, 260n, 411n, 425n, 427n, 430
- Grassi, Ernesto 17, 116, 176n, 278
- Gregory, Tullio 45n, 46, 49
- Grosseteste, Robert 57, 164, 175n, 313–16
- Guarini, Battista 574
- Guercino, 343
- Gundissalinus 430n
- Hall, Marcia 306–7, 308n, 310n, 311n, 337, 388n 433n, 472, 476n, 477, 480n, 482n, 484, 530, 586, 588n
- Hannibal 458n
- Hansen, Maria Fabricius 459–60
- Hecate 343, 585n
- Heemskerck, Maarten van 385–86, 390–93, 445, 454–55, 479n, 537n, 549n
- Helen of Troy 71, 74, 254, 262, 265, 281, 448, 450
Encomium on Helen see under Gorgias
- Hera, see also Juno 262n
- Heraclitus (pre-Socratic philosopher) 25, 28, 59n
- Heraclitus (grammarian) 56
- Hercules 64n, 65, 113, 115, 129n, 132n, 134n, 138n, 274, 398, 400, 563n
- Hermann the German 221
- Hermanus Posthumus 388, 390, 393n
- Hermes 143
- Hermes Trismegistus 420n
- Hermias 56
- Hermogenes 73, 177, 243, 250, 292, 294, 299n, 592
- Herodotus 369
- Hersey, George 16
- Hesiod 25n, 28, 31–32, 42n, 59n, 71n, 74n, 222
- Hildebert of Lanvin 386n, 391n
- Hills, Paul 304, 310–12, 314n
- Hipponax 120n
- Hoefnagel, Georg 545n
- Holanda, Francisco De 382, 445, 462n, 517, 536n, 562n, 570
- Homer 53, 56, 63, 84, 88, 92n, 120n, 157, 159n, 180–81, 206n, 213, 222, 223n 225, 229n, 240, 295, 407n, 505n
Iliad 30, 56n, 102
Odyssey 37, 180n
- Honorius 131n, 154n
- Honorius of Autun 201n
- Hopfer, Daniel 413
- Horace 100n, 104n, 126n, 151n, 212, 217, 226, 228–29, 248–50, 253, 254n, 267n, 276n, 407n, 408
Ars poetica 100, 223n, 259
Odes 88, 152n, 202n, 210n, 223n, 249, 250n, 252
- Hōrai 31, 47, 127, 213, 217, 555–56, 558, 559, 563, 564, 565
- Horapollon 354, 373, 411, 418–19, 572
- Hugh of St Victor 57n, 58n, 62
- Humboldt, Alexander von 9
- Hutton, James 408, 409n, 414n
- Hygeia 558–59
- Hypatius of Ephesus 161
- Iamblichus 42, 56, 419
- Icarus 252n
- Il Cecca (Francesco d'Angelo) 370n
- Ingegneri, Angelo 329–30, 333n
- Inghirami, Tommaso “Fedra” 374n
- Isaeus 89
- Isidore 33, 41n, 48n, 104n, 122n, 168n, 216, 223n, 228, 503n
- Isis 378n, 419n, 557, 558n
- Isocrates 71n, 89–91, 106n, 180n, 239n

- John of Garland 60n, 98n, 237n
 John of Hauville 61
 John the Baptist 464, 563n
 John the Evangelist 423n
 Jones, Inigo 326n, 331n
 Jones, Owen 3, 5, 7, 10, 495n, 497
 Joseph 540, 563n
 Josephus 370–71
 Joyce, James 1–2
 Julian 31n, 59n, 125n
 Julius II, pope (Giuliano della Rovere)
 372–73, 376, 379n, 464, 514n
 Palazzo of Giuliano della Rovere, see
 under Rome
 Julius III, pope (Giovanni del Monte) 381,
 395n, 396n
 Julius Caesar 100, 124n, 125, 131n, 203n, 359n,
 361, 363, 372, 373n
 Juno, see also Hera 38, 276, 332n, 333n,
 559n
 Jupiter, see also Zeus 38, 126n, 133, 134, 252,
 268, 276–78, 350, 505–7, 524, 557n
 Justinian 88, 154n, 174n
 Juvenal 130n, 202n
- Kahn, Charles 24nn13–14, 25–26, 28, 79n
 Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement* 5n,
 6–7, 8n, 17, 188n, 486, 596
 Kavalier, Matt 3, 9, 190n
 Kemp, Martin 4n, 319, 320n, 321, 323n, 326,
 501n, 540
 Klein, Robert 248n, 414n, 424n, 426, 429–30
 Kliemann, Julian 433n, 434n, 435n, 436
- Labacco, Antonio 482n
 La Bruyère, Jean de 275n
 Lactantius 48n, 206n, 254, 267n, 276n, 350,
 524n
 Lafrery, Antonio 484
 Landino, Cristoforo 202n, 213–14, 221, 226,
 228–29, 250n, 290n, 325n, 342, 362n,
 408, 439n
 Lascaris, Janus 408, 409n
 Lasinio, Carlo 542, 546
 Latona 557n
 Laura 204n, 205–8, 209nn49–51, 347, 350,
 364, 365n, 502
 Le Corbusier 5
- Leo X, pope (Giovanni de' Medici) 13, 372,
 376, 378nn 100, 103, 379, 394n, 408n,
 468n, 537, 542n
 “Letter to Leo X”, see under Castiglione
 Leombruno, Lorenzo 431n
 Leonardo da Udine 484n
 Leonardo da Vinci 4n, 285, 305, 308n, 321n,
 367n, 465n, 484n, 503–4, 577n
 Leto, Pomponio 203, 216n, 373, 374n, 406,
 464, 514
 Libanius 31n, 166, 368
 Ligorio, Pirro 198n, 324–25, 394n, 400n, 469,
 473, 494n, 509n, 551–67, 569–71, 573, 591
 Casino of Pius IV, see under Vatican
 Villa D'Este, see under Tivoli
 Lindberg, David 314n, 315n, 317, 319, 320n
 Lippi, Filippino 310n, 461n, 475, 485, 487,
 522, 526–28, 530n
 Livy 130n, 132–33, 154n, 253n, 350n, 371, 431n
 Lomazzo, Gian Paolo 109, 245–47, 248n,
 272n, 273, 285, 288, 297n, 298–300, 308,
 309n, 322, 362, 494n, 515, 530, 534, 567,
 569–71, 576–78
 Lombardo, Antonio 514n
 Lombardo, Pietro 512
 Lombardo, Tullio 458n, 514n
 ‘Longinus’ 40, 90n, 92n, 93, 102–3, 111n, 119n,
 163n, 164, 166–67
 Loos, Adolf 3, 5, 189
 L'Orange, H.P. 122n, 124n, 151–52, 156n, 168
 Lorenzetti, Ambrogio 178
 Lotto, Lorenzo 424n, 499n
 Lucan 267n
 Lucian 130n, 156, 347–48, 358, 368, 407, 431,
 556n
 Lucilius 97n, 219
 Lucius Stertinius 154n
 Lucretius 31n, 104n, 128n, 208n, 210n, 228n,
 243n, 253n
 Lull, Ramon 242, 244, 248n
 Lungi, Lionardo 562n
 Lysias 72n, 77, 83n, 89–91, 92n, 97n, 208, 290
 Lysippos 98n, 121
- MacCormack, Sabine 124nn18–19, 125n, 126,
 133n, 154n
 Mack, Peter 234n, 235–36, 237nn24–25,
 239nn28–29, 240n, 242n

- Macrobius 37, 56, 59, 61, 104n, 206n, 212n, 215n, 253, 459, 460n
- Maderno, Carlo 473n
- Madonna, see under Mary
- Madonna, Maria Luisa 562n
- Maffei, Mario 550n
- Magna mater*, see also Berecynthia, Cybele,
Dea natura, Diana of Ephesus 128–29, 358, 458, 556–57, 559n
- Maguire, Henry 55n, 57n, 59n, 157, 161n
- Maier, Michael, *Atalanta fugiens* 422n
- Malvasia, Carlo 500
- Mancinelli, Antonio 212n, 216–17, 226n
- Manetti, Gianozzo 186n, 277–78
- Manilius 197, 267n
- Mantegna, Andrea 337n, 379n, 385n, 431n, 455–58, 462, 465n, 475, 478, 479n, 502, 507–8, 526, 530n
Pallas expelling the Vices 507–9
Saint Sebastian 455–58, 502
Triumphs of Caesar 360–63, 365–67
- Mantegna, Francesco 365n
- Manutius (Manuzio), Aldus 38, 347n, 408, 418n
- Manuzio, Paolo 434n
- Marcanova, Giovanni 198, 369, 447–49, 451, 470
- Marcellus 98n, 131n, 133–35, 138
- Marco da Faenza 530n, 579–80
- Marco del Buono 364n
- Marcus Aurelius 166n, 364n
- Marrina, Lorenzo 512
- Mars 127n, 372n, 524n, 527
- Marshall, L.E. 60nn142–44, 61
- Marsuppini, Carlo 201n, 465
Tomb of Marsuppini, see under Florence, Santa Croce
- Mary 153n
Madonna 310n, 313, 346n, 365
Marian iconography 157
- Master of the Die 512n, 568n
- Mattioli, Pier Andrea 581n
- Maturanzio, Francesco 524n
- Maturino da Firenze, Francesco, see also
Polidoro da Caravaggio 472, 485–86, 551n
- Maximian 126, 151n, 155n
- Mazzoni, Iacopo 301, 302n, 595
- Medici family, see also Clement VII, Leo X
183n, 217, 325n, 332n, 375, 431, 433, 434n, 437, 439n, 473n, 485, 543
- Medici, Cosimo de' (Duke) 439n
- Medici, Francesco de' 434n, 438
- Medici, Ferdinando de' 334n, 473n, 542n, 581
- Medici, Giovanni de' 465
- Medici, Giuliano de' 222n, 421n
- Medici, Giuliano de' (Duke of Nemours and character in *Il libro del cortegiano*) 259n,
- Medici, Giuliano de' 374
- Medici, Lorenzo de' 77n, 187n, 201, 207, 209–10, 212, 225, 359n, 374, 376n, 421n, 462, 503
- Medici, Lorenzo de' Pierfrancesco de' 210n
- Medici, Lorenzo de' (Duke of Urbino) 374
- Medici, Maria de' 438n
- Medici, Piero de' 465
- Medici wedding festivities (1565) 325n, 332n, 438–41
- Meleager 87
- Melozzo da Forlì 529n
- Meltzoff, Stanley 431n, 432
- Menander Rhetor 122n, 126, 135n, 176n
- Mercury 66n, 212, 383, 433n, 508n, 524n, 571n
- Michael of Thessalonica 162
- Michelangelo 37, 265, 283n, 285, 289, 297–98, 299n, 337, 338nn230–31, 374n, 381, 395, 439n, 454–55, 480, 490, 514
New Sacristy (Medici Chapel), San Lorenzo, see under Florence
Sistine Chapel see under Vatican
- Michelangelo di Pietro 521n
- Midas 431
- Milizia, Francesco 500
- Miller, James 25n, 30n, 31nn41–42, 42nn76, 79, 47n, 53, 60n, 105n
- Minerva 38, 154n, 197, 222n, 507
- Mino da Fiesole 465n, 512
- Minturno, Sebastiano 243, 248, 294, 331n, 333n
- Mithridates VI Eupator 129

- Mitrović, Branko 16, 175, 184n, 185,
 191nn82–83, 282n, 304
 Mnemosyne (Mnemosine) 559
 Mocetto, Girolamo 431n
 Molza, Francesco Maria 576
 Montaigne, Michel de 575
 Montefeltro, Federico da 364n
 Morel, Philippe 499, 515n, 531n, 545n,
 570–71, 573, 579n, 581n, 594
 Moses 42, 270n, 419n, 562n, 563n, 565
 Muses 28, 31–32, 37, 42, 53, 59, 63–64, 65n,
 71n, 87–88, 206, 219n, 252n, 302, 303n,
 335, 553–55, 558, 559n, 562–66, 576
 Calliope 88, 303n, 342n
 Mussato, Albertino 65–66, 201–2
 Myron
 Cow 371n
 Discobolos 97n, 98n, 109–10, 287

 Narcissus 51n, 503n
 Neptune 332n, 333n, 557n, 559n
 Nero 126n, 376
 Niccolò da Verona 365n
 Niccolò dell'Abate 431n
 Nicholas v, pope (Tommaso Parentucelli)
 188n, 461
 Nicoletto da Modena 149, 446n, 512n, 515–16
 Nonnus 156
 Nosoponus 251
 Notturmo Napolitano 372
 Numa Pomphilus 132n, 562n

 Olympiodorus 56
 Ong, Walter 2, 70, 240, 252n
 Origen 48n, 57, 123n, 405n, 419n
 Orosius 369, 371n
 Orpheus 59n, 65n, 120n, 223n, 268, 348n
 Orti, Ameto 437–38
 Osiris 419n, 558n
 Ossola, Carlo 287n, 307n, 577, 589n
 Ovid 60n, 211–12, 347, 350, 464, 550n
 Amores 131n, 204n
 Fasti 151n, 210n, 254nn91–94, 458n
 Metamorphoses 254n, 260n, 267n, 388n,
 575
 Remedia amoris 507n

 Paganino, Giovanni Andrea 579, 581
 Palazzi, Giovan Andrea 414, 416, 418n, 421n,
 425n, 427, 428n
 Palisca, Claude 65n, 333n, 334n, 335–36
 Palissy, Bernard 341n
 Panormita (Antonio Beccadelli) 406n
 Palladio, Andrea 279n, 329n, 330, 385, 470,
 482n
 Palliolo, Paolo 374n, 378
 Panaetius 39, 111
 Pandora 74
 Panofsky, Erwin 132, 153n, 165, 298n, 300n,
 469
 Panormitano, Gian Vitale 367n
 Panvinio, Onofrio 198n, 370n, 434n, 435n,
 578n
 Paride da Ceresara 508n
 Parmenides 25, 28, 69, 72n, 73n
 Parmigianino 285, 487, 490–91, 492n, 583,
 585
 Parthenio, Bernardino 248–50
 Patrizi, Francesco (Patrizi of Siena, Bishop of
 Gaeta) 186n
 Patrizi, Francesco (Patrizi da Cherso) 64n,
 195n, 242n, 245n, 248, 278n, 301–3,
 333nn216–17, 334–36, 592
 Paul 50, 57n, 454n
 Paul the Silentary 157, 159, 161n
 Paul II, pope (Pietro Barbo) 371–72, 461n,
 464
 Paul III, pope (Alessandro Farnese) 433n
 Paulinus of Nola 104n, 159n
 Paulinus of Tyre 158
 Paullus Aemilius 98n, 130nn40, 43, 131, 359n
 Pausanias 164n
 Payne, Alina 6n, 16, 189n, 296n
 Pecham, John 310, 313n, 314
 Pegasus 485n
 Pelacani, Biagio 316n, 317
 Pellegrino, Camillo 429–30
 Pellegrino da Udine 199
 Pericles 180n
 Perino del Vaga 376–77, 431n, 477, 485, 490,
 493n, 512n, 536n, 567–68
 Perotti, Niccolò 194–95, 198, 213, 215–17, 219,
 227, 231, 234, 354n, 460–61, 464

- Perotti, Pyrrho 215
 Perseus 557n
 Perugino (Pietro Vannucci) 499, 522,
 524–25
 Peruzzi, Baldassare 16, 326, 329n, 332, 378n,
 393, 394n, 437, 462, 472, 475, 485n, 498,
 541, 563nn73–74
 Petrarch, see also Laura 93, 200, 202–9, 212,
 215n, 217, 229, 242, 255–56, 261, 297n,
 306, 347–48, 350, 352, 360, 364, 369–70,
 407, 421–22, 433n, 452n, 502
Africa 203, 204n, 253n
Bucolicum carmen 206n
Canzoniere 201n, 206–9, 503
Collatio 202–3
Contra Medicum 206n, 207nn40–41
Epystolae metricae 204n, 206n
Familiares 200n, 204n, 252–53, 367–68
Secretum 206n, 370
Seniles (Rerum senilium libri) 65, 66n,
 204n, 206n, 207n
Triumphs 204–5, 256, 276n, 350, 352,
 364–65
 depictions of 213, 350–53, 364–66
 Peutingier, Conrad 416n
 Phanes 585
 Phidias 89, 98n, 167, 177, 454n, 507
 Philagathos 157
 Philippus 87–88
 Philo 26, 30n, 31–32, 38, 41n, 42–43, 44n, 45,
 50, 54n, 56, 57n, 107n, 123n, 195n, 254,
 277, 278n, 461, 565n
 Philodemus 195n
 Philostratus (Flavius Philostratus) 67n, 69n,
 156n, 166, 167, 504, 579
 Philostratus the Elder (co-author of
 Imagines) 31n, 67, 68n, 75, 105, 158n,
 212–13, 303, 431n, 434n
 Philostratus the Younger (co-author of
 Imagines) 67, 68n, 75, 103n, 105, 166, 303,
 431n, 434n
 Photius 162, 310n
 Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco 251,
 264, 383, 501–2, 507n
 Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 64, 192,
 224–25, 233, 242n, 266, 270, 277, 347n,
 419, 426, 502
 Piero della Francesca 364n, 465n, 487n
 Piero di Cosimo 311n, 504
 Pighius, Stephanus 565n
 Pindar 31, 69n, 88, 107, 122–23, 229n, 248,
 252n, 333n
 Pino, Paulo 281–83, 298, 299n, 300, 303, 305,
 306n, 324n, 504, 509
 Pinturicchio 311n, 461n, 462, 475, 487,
 498–99, 515n, 518n, 521–22, 524, 525n,
 528, 529n, 540, 543n
 Piranesi, Giovanni Battista 455, 474
 Pisanello 444n, 487
 Pius II, pope (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini)
 203n, 370, 385
 Pius IV, pope (Giovanni Angelo Medici)
 439n, 559, 562n
 Pius V, pope (Antonio Ghislieri) 559
 Plato 24, 26n, 35n, 40, 42n, 48, 50, 72, 82,
 87n, 89n, 91–93, 98, 101, 106, 107, 112, 115,
 117, 121, 136, 183n, 186, 189, 220, 230, 263,
 301, 306, 322, 326, 407n, 595
Alcibiades 56
Cratylus 73
Critias 75n
Euthydemus 72n, 232n
Euthyphro 232n
Gorgias 25n, 70–71, 72n, 75–77, 82n, 111,
 215, 253n
Hippias Major (Greater Hippias) 48–49,
 82n, 189
Ion 77, 88, 232nn142–43, 252n
Laws 32, 54n, 75n, 92n, 107, 111n, 185,
 276n, 278n, 306n, 334
Menexenus 69n, 70n
Phaedo 75n
Phaedrus 72n, 73, 76–79, 87n, 124n,
 136–38, 156n, 175n, 184, 214, 255, 292
Philebus 27, 36, 38–39, 49, 52, 276n, 347n
Republic 30, 32, 50, 53, 56n, 74, 75, 107,
 185, 229, 230, 256, 306n, 334, 505n, 589n
Sophist 24n, 35, 68, 74, 90, 163, 168n,
 273n, 301, 302n, 504, 595
Statesman 27, 54n, 308n
Symposium 29n, 50n, 51, 54, 209n, 214,
 222n, 262n, 263, 266n, 270, 316
Timaeus 10, 21, 28–29, 30–34, 38, 40n,
 41–43, 45–47, 54n, 59–60, 62n, 74, 107,
 111, 158n, 228
 Pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* 29n, 30n, 54n, 107n

- Platonic form or idea, Platonic tradition, see subject index
- Plautus 374, 407n
- Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 93, 98n, 109n, 121, 127n, 129n, 130n, 132nn51–52, 133, 141–42, 145n, 163n, 213, 215, 219, 227, 262n, 307n, 342n, 347, 407, 416n, 433, 464, 498n, 503n, 504n, 531
- Pliny the Younger 223n, 375, 376n, 433
- Plotinus, *Enneads* 4, 28, 29–30, 31nn41–42, 35–36, 37–38, 43, 50–51, 52n, 53n, 54, 55, 74n, 81n, 130n, 164, 166n, 250n, 264, 270n, 271n, 293, 315, 418
- Plutarch 25n, 32n, 37n, 39, 42n, 69, 88, 93n, 121n, 125n, 126n, 129, 130, 131nn45–46, 50, 52, 132nn, 134, 168n, 195n, 215, 308, 360n, 375n, 407, 419n
- Pseudo–Plutarch, *De Homero* 56n
- Pocchetti, Bernardino 495, 532n, 583
- Poe, Edgar Allan 597n
- Polia 345–48, 350
- Poliphilo 345–46, 347n, 348, 350, 354, 357–58
- Poliziano, Angelo 201, 210n, 212, 216n, 219–29, 231, 234, 251, 255–56, 264, 348n, 411, 432, 464, 576
- Pollaiuolo, Antonio 317n, 486n
- Pollitt, J.J. 75nn32–33, 90n, 125n, 167
- Polybius 75, 129n, 132n
- Polykleitos 89, 98n, 121, 291, 362n
- Pomona 350, 558
- Pontano, Giovanni 194, 336n, 343, 406n, 407, 412
- Pontormo, Jacopo 307n, 308n, 311n, 487
- Porcacchi, Tomaso 249
- Porphyry 37, 56, 183n, 235nn13, 16, 304
De antro nymphaeum 37
- Porto, Francesco 248
- Posidonius 39, 167n
- Possevino, Antonio 454n
- Pottier, Edmond 21
- Poussin, Nicholas 305n, 343
- Praxiteles 131, 177, 454n
- Priapus 383, 576
- Primaticcio, Francesco 339n, 431n, 482
- Prisciani, Pellegrino 194–99, 215, 373, 391
- Proclus 31n, 32, 52–56, 60n, 230, 420
- Procopius 157n, 159, 161–63, 460n
- Propertius 140nn74, 77, 143n, 149n, 204n, 205, 216n, 217, 224n, 229n, 233n, 360, 575
- Proserpina (Persephone) 133n, 154n, 211n, 254n
- Protagoras 67n, 69n, 72, 73n, 75
- Proteus 90, 232, 233, 238, 264n, 321, 343, 344n, 552n, 570–71, 595
- Protogenes 176, 308n
- Prudentius 104n, 153n, 155n, 159, 163, 254, 451, 452n
- Pseudo–Dionysius 1, 42n, 44, 50–52, 55, 62–63, 161, 164–66, 278n, 314n, 315n, 316, 428
- Ptolemy II Philadelphus 120, 127, 129, 143n, 151
- Ptolemy III 120
- Ptolemy IV 120
- Ptolemy (Geographer) 314, 322, 461
- Pucci, Antonio 201
- Pucci, Francesco 220
- Putaneus, Erycius 423n
- Pythagoras 25, 42, 215, 274
- Quevedo, Francisco 247n, 275n
- Quicchelberg, Samuel 246, 484
- Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 27, 77n, 82n, 83–84, 92n, 94, 96n, 97–106, 108–9, 112, 115–16, 131n, 163, 191n, 209, 221n, 222, 223n, 228, 234, 238nn26–27, 241, 247n, 251, 253, 259, 260n, 264, 270, 272n, 285, 287, 354, 410, 412, 576
- Raffaellino da Reggio 434
- Raimondi, Marcantonio 149, 446n, 477
- Rainaldi, Girolamo 398
- Ralph of Longchamps 60, 405
- Ramus, Petrus 240nn30, 32, 248, 252n
- Ramism, see subject index
- Raphael 13, 194, 262n, 275n, 285, 290n, 297, 299n, 306, 307n, 326, 337–38, 394, 433, 437, 439n, 444n, 462, 466, 468n, 469–72, 474–77, 479, 492, 493n, 500, 501n, 515n, 524, 531, 533n, 536–51, 563, 565, 578, 595
- ‘Letter to Leo X’, see under Castiglione

Raphael (cont.)

- Loggetta of Cardinal Bibbiena, Logge,
Stanza della Segnatura, Stanze, see
under Vatican
- Chigi Chapels, Villa Farnesina, Villa
Madama, see under Rome
- Reni, Guido 14, 532n
- Rhodiginus, Caelius 213, 215, 226n, 227
- Riario, Raffaele, cardinal 372n, 374, 472
- Richard of St Victor 57
- Riegl, Alois 5, 7, 28
Stilfragen 5, 7, 22n, 23n, 145–46, 148,
149n, 151n, 465n
- Ripa, Cesare 229–30, 420, 595
- Ripanda, Jacopo 462, 472, 475, 494n
- Robortello, Francesco 103, 230–31, 248,
249n, 259n, 289n, 291, 296
- Rochette, Raoul 563n
- Romano, Giulio 339n, 477–80, 485, 487–88,
493n, 540n, 546–47, 550n, 551
- Rosselli, Antonio 465
- Rosselli, Francesco 352n, 353, 480–81
- Rosselli, Pietro 374
- Rossetti, Biagio 199
- Rossi–Pinelli, Orietta 394
- Rosso (Giovanni Battista di Jacopo) 339–40,
376n, 480–83
- Roville, Guillaume 413n, 414
- Rucellai, Giovanni 462, 525
- Ruscelli, Girolamo 244n, 249, 414, 420n,
421n, 422–23, 425n, 433
- Ruskin, John 3, 5, 495n
- Sabbatini, Lorenzo 531n
- Sabellio, Marcantonio 374n
- Saccone, Eduardo 269n, 270
- Sadoletto, Jacopo 374n, 576n
- Salomon, Bernard 364n
- Salutati, Coluccio 64–66, 182n, 221, 239,
336n
- Salviati, Francesco 477n, 484–85, 487–89,
535n, 540–41, 583, 585–90
- Sambucus, Johannes 571
- Sandström, Sven 16, 336, 337nn227, 230,
498, 521n, 527n, 530n, 594
- Sangallo, Antonio da (Antonio da Sangallo
the Younger) 548, 549n
- Sangallo, Bastiano da 329
- Sangallo, Giuliano da 374–75, 385, 445–46,
465, 494n, 517–19
- Sannazaro, Jacopo 233, 342–44, 381n
Arcadia 233n, 342–44, 407
- Sansovino, Andrea del 16, 380n, 512, 514n
- Sansovino, Francesco 249, 435n
- Santi di Tito 562n
- Sappho 87n, 88, 254n
- Saturn 364n, 524n
- Savanarola, Girolamo 528n
- Scaevola 136, 219
- Scaliger, Julius Caesar (Scaligero), *Poetices
libri septem* 32, 216, 250, 251, 290
- Scamozzi, Vincenzo 295–96, 298, 300, 322,
329–30, 500n, 533
- Scarabelli, Orazio 396n
- Scaurus 130n
- Schedel, Hermann 528n
- Schlitt, Melinda 586n
- Scipio Africanus 123n, 132nn48–49, 203,
359n, 364n
- Scipio Nasicus 458
- Scylla 168n, 503n
- Sellaio, Jacopo del 213, 352nn25–26, 364n
- Semper, Gottfried 3, 5, 7, 9–10, 23n, 30n, 151,
152n
- Seneca 64n, 201, 252–53, 269, 365n, 374,
407
- 'Sennuccio Fiorentino' 203
- Septimus Severus 151n, 156,
- Serlio, Sebastiano 13, 245, 321, 326–33, 374n,
376n, 385, 386n, 387, 393–94, 468n,
482–83, 547, 551
- Settis, Salvatore 390n, 391n, 454n, 464, 466,
468
- Severan emperors 146n
- Sextus Empiricus 72, 75n, 503n
- Sforza, Battista 364n
- Sforza, Gian Galeazzo 367n
- Shakespeare, William 275n, 420n, 505n
- Sibyl, Rome as 386, 389
Cumae Sibyl 364n, 378n
Tiburtine Sibyl 400
- Sidney, Philip 240n, 255n
- Sidonius Apollinaris 104n, 159, 254, 305,
408n
- Signorelli, Luca, see also Cappella San Brizio
under Orvieto 326, 527–30
- Silenus 252, 544n
- Silus Italicus 131n
- Silvestris, Bernardus 45n, 58, 60–61, 215n
- Simplicius 24, 25n, 31, 34n

- Sirens 254, 328n
 Celestial Sirens 32n, 37, 59, 302, 333n, 334
 Sixtus IV, pope (Francesco della Rovere) 317n, 371, 372n, 379n, 461
 Sixtus V, pope (Felice Peretti) 379, 401
 Smith, Christine 176–77, 186n, 192
 Smith, Graham 563n, 565, 566n
 Socrates 53, 56n, 73, 75n, 76–78, 106n, 112, 118, 130n, 136, 230, 256, 591n
 Sol 124n, 125, 126n
 Sophocles 31n, 322
 Oedipus Rex 329–30, 592
 Sorte, Cristoforo 299, 307n
 Soter, Johannes 409n
 Spenser, Edmund, *The Faerie Queene* 55n, 255, 257n, 344n
 Speroni, Sperone 240–41, 453n, 586
 Spini, Gherardo 185, 296n, 486, 492n
 Squarcione, Francesco 455n, 456n
 Statius 201, 203n, 219, 222, 226, 228, 528
 Silvae 104n, 124n, 149n, 219, 223, 224n, 228,
 Steyner, Heinrich 417
 Strabo 40, 71n
 Struever, Nancy 17, 66, 72n, 80n, 96n, 188n, 232, 235n, 308n
 Suetonius 130n, 156n, 202
 Suger, Abbot of St Denis 165–66, 316, 460n,
 Sulpizio da Veroli, Giovanni 374
 Summers, David 17, 100n, 108, 168n, 282n, 287, 289, 291, 299n, 303, 318, 340, 427n
 Symmachus 102n, 104n, 158, 407n
 Synesius 31n, 56

 Tacitus 102n, 131n, 375n, 418n
 Taegio, Bartolomeo 422n, 573n
 Tassi, Agostino 532n
 Tasso, Ercole 422nn57, 59, 423
 Tasso, Torquato 41n, 199n, 204n, 248, 255, 258–59, 292–95, 301, 302n, 306, 344n, 421nn52, 54, 423, 425nn70–71, 428–29, 575, 595
 Taylor, Thomas 28n, 81n
 Tellus 124n, 126, 128n, 146n, 151n
 Tempesta, Antonio 434, 436, 531n, 578
 Terence 198n, 345n, 374
 Tertullian 153n, 198n, 276n, 572n
 Tesauro, Emanuele 412n, 420n, 423–24, 426–31
 Themis 565
 Themistius 59n, 128, 502n
 Theocritus 85, 87n, 138, 148n, 343, 575
 Theodosius, see Theodosian Code and Missorium of Theodosius
 ‘Theophilus’ 160
 Theophrastus 24n, 25n, 71n, 82, 84, 85, 89, 106, 275n, 407
 Thucydides 71n, 83n, 89–90, 98n
 Tibaldi, Pellegrino 326, 540
 Tiberius 126n
 Tithonus 557n
 Titus 370–71
 Tolomei, Claudio 469, 576n
 Tommaso da Messina 253
 Toqueville, Alexis de 597n
 Toscanella, Orazio 229, 248–49, 429n
 Toscanelli, Paolo 317
 Toynbee, J.M.C. 145n, 146n, 149, 515n
 Trajan 124n
 Traversari, Ambrogio 314n, 316n, 461
 Trinkaus, Charles 239
 Trissino, Gian Giorgio 255
 Tura, Cosme 464n

 Uberti, Fazio degli, *Dittamondo* 204n, 386, 389
 Uranus 256

 Valeriano, Pierio 354n, 412n, 418n, 420, 586n
 Valerius Maximus 253n, 524n
 Valla, Lorenzo 188n, 231, 232n, 234–35, 237–38, 239n, 242n, 251, 370n, 406n, 464n, 466
 Valvassore, Clemente 249
 Varchi, Benedetto 37, 229n, 270, 281, 285n, 289, 292, 297n, 298, 300n, 301, 303, 304n, 307–8, 321, 337n, 504
 Varro 38, 39n, 126n, 276, 279, 566n
 Vasari, Giorgio 37, 282, 284–85, 287n, 288, 290n, 295, 297–98, 303–5, 307, 308n, 309, 311n, 321, 324, 329, 338, 371n, 374n, 376n, 395, 397, 430, 431n, 433–34, 435n, 438–40, 469, 472n, 475, 482n, 485, 492n,

- Vasari, Giorgio (cont.)
 493n, 497n, 503–4, 510n, 526n, 527n,
 530n, 532n, 533n, 534n, 535, 541, 562n,
 579, 585n, 586
- Vellutello, Alessandro 205n,
- Venantius Fortunatus 104n, 159
- Veneziano, Agostino 152, 477, 484n, 485n,
 512n
- Venturini, G.F. 402–4
- Venus, see also Aphrodite 31n, 93n, 129,
 152n, 197, 208n, 210, 212, 222n, 225n,
 255n, 256–58, 270n, 271n, 305n, 332,
 333n, 345–46, 348–50, 357, 373n, 375n,
 379, 381, 432, 507, 524n, 557n, 558, 559n,
 565n, 583n, 586
- Veronica 527n
- Verres 151
- Verrocchio, Andrea 285, 352n, 465
- Versnel, H.S. 126, 127n, 130n, 131n
- Vertumnus, see also Arcimboldo 232n, 233,
 301n, 350, 570
- Vesalius, Andreas 388
- Vescovini, Graziella Federici 314n, 317
- Vesely, Dalibor 17, 310, 312, 315, 316n, 320n,
 323n
- Vespasian 370–71
- Vico, Enea 484n, 485, 512n
- Vico, Giambattista 5n, 427n
- Vida, Marco Girolamo 226–27, 469n
- Viglius Zuichemus 242n, 244
- Vignola, Giacomo Barozzi da 322n, 395,
 397–99, 434, 436–38
- Villard de Honnecourt 442–44
- Virgil 56, 60n, 151, 205n, 214, 222, 224, 226,
 229n, 233, 237n, 238n, 240, 253, 295,
 342, 343n, 344, 358, 378, 469n, 526n,
 528
Aeneid 128, 254n
Eclogues 148n, 151,
Georgics 148, 233, 344n, 362n, 575
Pseudo-Virgil, Aetna 254n
- Virgilio, Giovanni del 201
- Vitruvius, *De architectura* 113n, 145n, 184n,
 185n, 191n, 195, 198n, 243n, 279, 302n,
 318, 320, 322n, 323–24, 326, 329n, 347,
 357, 374, 385, 391, 483n, 497, 498n, 500,
 516, 518
- Vives, Juan Luis 242, 251, 275–78
- Vlastos, Gregory 10, 25n
- Vogtherr, Heinrich 413
- Volpato, Giovanni 541n, 544
- Warburg, Aby 197, 209n,
- Ward–Perkins, J.B. 145n, 146n, 149, 515n
- Wardy, Robert 69, 96n
- Webb, John 326n
- Webb, Ruth 162n
- Wetherbee, Winthrop 49, 58n, 59n, 60n,
 61n, 62
- Winckelmann, Johann 454
- William of Conches 45–47, 59, 60n, 62,
 215n, 307n
- William of Moerbeke 314
- Wind, Edgar 64, 65n, 212n, 416n, 418n, 419n
- Witelo 310, 313n, 314–15, 316nn162, 168
- Wohl, Hellmut 16, 108, 281, 287n, 307n, 316n,
 324, 460n, 461n, 462n, 465n, 472nn82,
 84, 475–76, 487–88, 490n, 515n, 521n,
 529n
- Wornum, Ralph 10, 22n
- Xenophon 25n, 113n, 407
- Xenophanes 28
- Xerxes 181n
- Zarlino, Gioseffo 9n, 306n
- Zenale, Bernardo 464
- Zephyr, Zephyrus 211, 254n
- Zerner, Henri 340
- Zeus, see also Jupiter 31, 127n, 138n, 152n,
 254n
- Zeuxis 262–65, 281–82, 289n, 291, 293n,
 296–97, 431n, 595
- Zoppo, Marco 455n
- Zuccari, Federico 431n, 434, 439n, 543n, 562,
 565n, 586n
Idea 281–85, 298, 300, 304, 308, 321, 429,
 487, 492–93, 541–42, 595
- Zuccari, Taddeo 396n, 434–35, 541, 578,
 586n
- Zucchi, Jacopo 532n, 581–82, 584

Index of Places

- Akrai, theatre 121
Alexandria
 Homereion 120
Antioch 368n
Aphrodisias
 Hadrianic Baths 146–48
 Sebasteion 126n
Arcadia, see also under Sannazaro and Sidney
 343, 407
 Arcadian Academy 398n
Arpinum 137
Athens 97, 166, 180–182, 322
 Academy 137
 Erechtheion 145n
 Precinct of Dionysus 142

Bagnaia, Villa Lante 394, 401–3
Benevento, Arch of Trajan 472n
Bergamo, Santa Maria Maggiore 424n, 499n
Bologna 201, 373, 470
 Palazzo Fava 338
 Palazzo Magnani 339
 Palazzo Poggi 540
 University of Bologna 240n

Caprarola, Palazzo Farnese 434–38, 532n, 541, 565n, 573, 578, 579n
Città di Castello, Palazzo Vitelli a
 Sant'Egidio 579, 581
Como, Musaeo Ioviani 433
Constantinople 125n, 159n, 361, 368n
 Church of the Apostles 156, 177
 Church of Polyeuctus 157nn123, 128
 Hagia Sophia 23, 153n, 157–62
 Great Palace 162
Corinth 98n, 125n, 132n
Crete 384
 Labyrinth 30, 31n
Cyprus 385
Cythera 256n, 348, 350, 357

Delos, House of the Masks 142

Eden, see also paradise 254
Egypt 22n, 23n, 129, 129, 460n
Einsiedeln, Monastery 153n
Elysium 254
Ephesus
 Antonine Altar 124
 Temple of Artemis 127n
Epidauros, theatre 121
Euboia, theatre 121

Ferrara 194, 197n, 199, 336n
 Palazzo Schifanoia 196–98, 455
Florence 175–79, 182–83, 184, 224n, 225, 307n, 408, 418, 438–40, 461n, 465n
 Badia Fiorentina 465n
 Baptistry 201, 219n, 462
 Cathedral 462, 510
 Piazza della Signoria 439n
 Palazzo di Bianca Capello 495
 Palazzo Capponi 583
 Palazzo Pitti 14, 396n
 Grotta grande (Buontalenti's Grotto) 532n, 583n
 Palazzo Vecchio 434–35, 437, 439, 462n, 530n, 535n, 545n, 579–80, 583
 Sala di Udienza 583, 585–87
Rucellai Chapel 461
Santa Croce 201n, 465, 467, 510n
San Lorenzo 307n, 375n
 Old Sacristy 465
 New Sacristy 297
Santa Maria Novella 461
 Strozzi Chapel 522, 526, 527
 Tornabuoni Chapel 375, 465, 466, 530n
San Miniato al Monte
 Chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal 462
Santa Trinità 439
 Sassetti Chapel 465n
Uffizi 211, 334n, 375n, 377, 432, 445n, 471, 485n, 515n, 548, 549n, 578
Via Laura project 374–75
Via Maggio 439

- Fontainebleau 356, 482n103, 482n104
 Galerie de François Ier 339–40, 480, 481n
- Gaza
 St Sergius 157
 St Stephen 157
- Genazzano, Nymphaeum of Bramante 376n, 400n
- Gradoli (Viterbo), Palazzo Farnese 472n
- Hades 120n, 145n, 309n, 348n, 379n, 528
- Helicon 554, 558
- Hesperides 217n, 379, 400
- Ida, Mount 152n, 224n, 458n
- Jerusalem 388n
 Church of the Holy Sepulchre 156, 163n
 Temple 370
- Jordan, river 233
- Kephisia 140
- Kos, Temple of Asclepius 121
- Lepcis Magna 146n
- Lindos, Acropolis 121
- Lucca, San Frediano 528
- Mainz, Jupiter Column 126n
- Mantua 332n, 466
 Palazzo dell'Arco, Sala dello Zodiaco 498, 499, 542n
 Palazzo Ducale 365, 366, 367n, 462, 478
 Palazzo Marmirolo 360, 361n, 393n
 Palazzo San Sebastiano 367
 Palazzo Tè 339n, 477, 479, 480, Sant'Andrea, Funerary Chapel of Mantegna 379
- Memphis, Serapeion 118
- Milan, Castello Sforzesco 367n
- Munich 466n, 468n, 474n
- Mytilene 376n
- Naples 342, 343, 406
 Archaeological Museum 139, 140n, 143
 Palace of the King of Naples 374
 Poggio Reale 374
 Tempietto of Pontano 406n
- Nemi, Sanctuary of Diana 557
- Nimrud 23n
- Nysa 127n, 145
- Orchomenos 22n
- Orvieto 462
 Cathedral, San Brizio Chapel 527–30
- Ostia 385
 Bishop of Ostia's Palace 472
- Padua 201
 Chiesa degli Eremitani, Orvetari Chapel 455
 Odeo Cornaro 498
- Palestrina, Temple of Fortune 375
- Paradise 6, 32, 41n, 42, 43n, 48n, 161, 180n, 188n, 190n, 207, 247n, 258n, 310, 563n, 565
 earthly paradise 254nn91–92, 256–57, 357, 378
 false paradise 255, 257–59
- Parma 518
 Convento di San Paolo 531n
 Camera di San Paolo 572
 Santa Maria della Steccata 490, 583
- Parnassus 202n, 203, 576
- Pergamon 121, 129, 138n, 142, 145n, 146, 148, 151n, 152n
- Perugia
 Collegio del Cambio 499, 522, 524, 524n82
- Pesaro 268n140, 312, 337, 359n36, 394, 394n148
- Piacenza, Palazzo Farnese 395n
- Pierius 554
- Poggio a Caiano, Villa Medici 376n, 433n
- Pompeii 139, 143, 149n98, 437n116
- Pozzuoli 364
- Priene 121
- Ravenna 123n, 155n, 157n, 159n
 Mausoleum of Galla Placidia 153
- Rome (excluding Vatican) 13, 89, 94–95, 98n, 110, 125, 126, 128–35, 137, 177n, 188n, 202–3, 324, 339, 342–43, 358–59, 365, 367–83, 385–93, 398, 400, 408n, 444n, 448, 453, 455, 458, 460–62, 468n, 484, 487, 512, 567
 Ara pacis 128n, 149, 151–53, 168, 473n
 Arch of Constantine 124–25, 151n, 337n, 372n, 459, 469, 514n

- Arch of Septimus Severus 151n
 Arch of Titus 371n
 Baths of Caracalla 68n
 Baths of Diocletian 367, 468n
 Capitol 132–33, 202–3, 360, 372n, 374, 378, 380n
 1513 Capitol festivities 372, 374, 376–79, 439n
 Casino di Villa Giustiniani Massimo 474
 Casino Rospigliosi 473–74
 Castel Sant'Angelo 376–77, 378n, 477, 578
 Circus Maximus 154n
 Colosseum 198n, 391, 531
 Domus Aurea 156, 375, 445n, 487, 494n, 515n, 521n, 524n, 526n, 528n, 531, 536, 544n
 Forum of Augustus 127n
 Forum Boarium 154
 Forum of Nerva 391n
 Forum of Trajan 146n
 Greek College 408n
 Grotto of Egeria 562n
 Horti Acilorum 376n
 Horti Farnesiani 398–99
 Horti Sallustiani 376n
 Isola Tiberina 557n
 Lateran Baptistery 152, 153n, 462, 498n
 Lateran Basilica 428
 Lupercal 398
 Meta Romuli 468n
 Palatine Hill 376, 385n, 386, 398, 485n
 Palazzo Altemps 499n
 Palazzo Branconio dell'Aquila 470–71, 472n
 Palazzo della Cancelleria, Sala dei Cento Giorni 433–34, 436, 479, 498n, 583
 Palazzo Capodiferra–Spada 470–71
 Palazzo Colonna ai SS. Apostoli 523
 Palazzina di Giuliano della Rovere 522–24, 525n
 Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere 498, 521n, 522, 535n
 Palazzo Doria Pamphili 591
 Palazzo Farnese
 Galleria Farnese 339, 593–95
 Sala dei Fasti Farnesi 541, 583, 586–88
 Palazzo Gaddi 472n, 485
 Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne 563n
 Palazzo Mattei di Giove 473
 Palazzo Milesi 485–86
 Palazzo Ricci Sacchetti 583, 588–91
 Palazzo Ruspoli 582
 Palazzo della Valle di Mezzo 472–73
 Palazzo Venezia 499
 Palazzo Zuccari 283n
 Pantheon 326, 375, 474, 549
 Piazza Navona 372, 375–76
 Pigna (rione) 378n
 Porticus Deorum Consentium 460n
 Quirinal Palace 500n
 Roma quadrata 398
 Quirinal Hill 406
 Quirinal Palace, Sala dei Corazzieri 500
 S. Agnese fuori le mura 159
 Santissimi Apostoli 512n, 523
 San Clemente 152–53, 512n
 SS Cosmas and Damian 161n, 462
 Santa Costanza 462–63
 Santa Croce in Gerusalemme 462
 San Lorenzo fuori le mura 354n, 518, 528n
 San Marco 462
 Santa Maria dell'Anima 535n, 583n
 Santa Maria del Popolo 475, 512n, 514n, 522, 544n
 Basso della Rovere Chapel 462, 475, 521–522, 525n
 Chigi Chapel 474–76, 586n
 Costa Chapel 475, 521
 Domenico della Rovere or Della Rovere Chapel 475, 521
 Santa Maria della febbre 370n
 Santa Maria della Pace
 Chigi Chapel 337–38
 Ponzetti Chapel 462
 Santa Maria di Loreto 544n
 Santa Maria in Aracoeli 462, 512n
 Bufalini Chapel 461–62, 515n, 518n
 Crucifixion Chapel 462
 Santa Maria sopra Minerva 512n, 513
 Carafa Chapel 461n, 462, 522, 528
 Tomb of Bregno 362n
 San Paolo fuori le mura 462n
 Santa Petronilla 370n
 San Pietro in Montorio, Tempio of Bramante 461n, 462

Rome (cont.)

- San Pietro in Vincoli 514n
 - San Prassede 512n
 - Santa Sabina 461n
 - San Venanzio 462
 - Temple of Saturn 460n
 - Templum Pacis 135, 371
 - Testaccio 448
 - Theatre of Pompey 129–30, 135, 375, 376n, 438
 - Trajan's Column 472
 - Trajan's Markets 470n
 - Via Ripetta 375
 - Via Sacra 468n
 - Via Triumphalis 370
 - Villa Borghese 473
 - Villa Doria Pamphili 473
 - Villa Farnesina 376, 462, 498, 531, 533, 541, 576n, 588
 - Villa Farnesina (ancient villa), Cubiculum B 94–95
 - Villa Giulia 395–98, 472, 531n, 541
 - Villa Lante 551
 - Villa of Livia 126n
 - Villa Madama 194, 394, 541, 546–52, 563
 - Villa Medici 472, 473n, 474, 532n, 542n, 581–82, 584
 - Villa del Pignetto Sacchetti 474
- Saint Denis, Basilica 165–66, 316, 460n
- Sicily 133n, 156n, 157n
- Siena 186n, 360n, 365n, 512n
- Cathedral
 - Piccolomini Chapel 514n
 - Piccolomini Library 522, 525
 - Monte Oliveto Maggiore 528
- Soragna, Rocca Meli Lupi 583n
- Split, Palace of Diocletian 156n
- Syracuse 98n, 120, 133–34
- Taenarus 385
- Thebes 22n
- Thessaloniki, Arch of Galerius 126
- Tivoli 219, 252n 400, 385
- Hadrian's Villa 68n, 433n
 - Villa D'Este 400–4, 429n, 543n, 552, 555, 567
- Torrechiara (Parma), Castello Sforza di Santa Fiore 583n

Treviso 345n, 346

Trier 156n

Urbino 194, 268, 274, 323, 324n, 328, 332, 347n, 394, 412n, 499, 512n

Varallo, Santa Maria della Grazie 528

Vatican 202, 221n, 370–71, 373, 376, 379n, 383, 514, 515n, 579

Baptistry 163

Belvedere 326, 375–77, 383, 394–95, 400, 462, 475, 499, 537n, 540, 555, 558n, 562n

Belevedere Statue court, see also

*Apollo Belvedere, Belvedere Torso,**"Cleopatra", Commodus, Laocoon,**Tomb of the Haterii, Venus Felix*

372, 373n, 378–80, 382–83, 394n,

Casino of Pius IV 473, 552–67, 592

Library 500

Museums 123n, 124n, 140n,

Obelisk 370, 373n

Palace

Borgia Apartments 420n, 461n, 522, 572, 573n

Greek Library 498

Logge 479–80, 485, 500, 501n, 515n, 524, 531, 532n, 537–46, 550n, 563, 565, 570–71, 572, 573n, 577

Loggetta of Cardinal Bibbiena

536–38, 542, 551

Sala di Costantino 477–79, 488, 498n, 540, 583, 586

Stanze 258, 462, 541

Stanza della Segnatura 325–26, 337, 378n, 439n, 462

Stufetta of Cardinal Bibbiena 536

Sistine chapel 307, 337, 461, 541, 543, 583

St Peter's 153n, 370n, 373n, 454n, 475, 512n, 515n, 543n

Venice 219n, 242, 244, 331n, 342, 345, 346n, 514n

Frari 514n

SS Giovanni e Paolo 345n, 514n

San Marco, Campanile 435n

Santa Maria dei Miracoli 465n

Vicenza

Loggia del Capitano 470

Palazzo Barbaran da Porto 470

Teatro Olimpico 329–31

Subject Index

Academies of the Italian Renaissance

- Accademia degli Affidati (Pavia) 275n
- Accademia degli Alterati (Florence) 334n
- Accademia degli Sdegnati (Rome) 576n
- Accademia dei Vignaiuoli (Rome) 576n
- Accademia del Disegno (Florence) 283n, 305
- Accademia della Crusca (Florence) 334n
- Accademia della Val di Blenio (Milan) 577n
- Accademia della Virtù or dei Virtuosi (Rome) 469n
- Accademia di San Luca (Rome) 282, 300n
- Accademia Olimpica (Vicenza) 249
- acanthus 140, 145–46, 148, 149–50, 151–53, 390–91, 442n, 448, 482, 484, 485, 494, 510, 511, 512, 515, 516, 524n, 531, 542n, 559, 575, 579
- accident, accidental qualities, in Aristotelian tradition 3, 24, 36n, 46, 73, 79–80, 81, 83, 91, 102, 107, 109, 173, 189, 231, 236n, 237, 264, 265, 281, 283, 302n, 303, 304, 308, 309, 315n, 356, 392, 427, 453–54, 456, 459, 465, 476, 487, 501, 504–5, 507, 526, 544, 574, 586
- actio* in rhetoric, see also *pronuntiatio*, *gestio* 108–9, 112, 117, 260, 272n, 285
- active life 42, 65, 115–16, 255, 259, 347n, 379
- actualisation, actuality, in Aristotelian tradition, see also *energeia* 15, 35–37, 49, 67, 74, 79, 83–84, 102, 109, 112, 132n, 138, 166, 173, 191, 208, 235, 272, 281, 284, 288, 289, 303–4, 314, 341, 369n, 419, 458, 490, 504–5, 530, 534, 553, 583
- adventus* 154, 359
- aesthetic apprehension, aesthetics 1–3, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 41, 49, 72n, 75, 80, 86n, 89n, 96, 106n, 114, 121, 122, 134, 138, 161, 164, 165, 167n, 183, 190n, 194, 220, 279n, 392, 393, 439, 453–54, 465, 470, 487n, 500, 594, 596
- aesthetic judgement 6n, 8, 96, 232
- affect, affective 9, 12, 41, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 78, 84, 89, 103, 109, 120, 121, 165, 191n, 206,

- 243n, 246, 248, 279, 281, 290n, 293n, 304, 306, 309, 336nn223–24 337, 440, 501, 505, 512, 534, 583, 592
- affectation, *affettazione* 71n, 82, 90, 92, 105n, 253, 267n, 270
- affetti* 292n, 329, 333n, 336n, 440n, 526, 592
- agent images 247, 437
- agency 54, 209, 292, 338, 505, 510
- agon* 123, 129
- air, as medium 54n, 505, 507
- akosmia* 68–69, 71, 75, 105
- all'antica* 352, 362n, 448, 455, 465, 473, 475, 486n, 493, 495, 510, 514n, 518, 530, 534, 581
- allegory, see also 'theological' poetry 37, 42n, 56, 58–59, 60, 96, 131, 173, 204n, 205, 209, 210, 214, 215n, 246, 344, 360, 364, 401, 424, 425, 428, 429, 437, 441, 552, 553, 555, 559, 562, 565n, 570, 573, 574, 577, 588, 594n
- Christian and theological allegory 57n, 58, 60, 309, 371n
- cosmic allegory 31n, 33, 43, 51n, 56, 59, 128, 198, 200, 202, 592
- amphitheatre 247n, 276, 278, 357, 373n
- amplification, *amplificatio*, in rhetoric 104n, 118, 119, 122n, 233n, 234n, 240–41, 250, 410, 586
- anagogic sense, in Scriptural exegesis 57n, 165, 214, 316, 424
- Annunciation 462n, 466, 510n, 563
- antiquarianism 8, 14, 94, 96, 140, 205, 275, 343, 348n, 354, 358, 360, 474, 476
- antiquity 4, 8n, 9, 21, 59, 68, 93, 94, 102, 122, 131n, 146n, 168, 173, 174, 177, 200, 204, 222, 232, 251, 254, 257, 290, 309n, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 348, 350, 356, 357, 359–60, 362, 369, 370–71, 379, 381, 388, 392, 408n, 409–10, 416, 425n, 442, 447–48, 452, 455–56, 459, 466, 468–69, 476, 485, 487, 494–95, 530, 537, 538, 543, 554, 592
- antiquities 13, 308, 344–45, 350, 354, 358, 360, 371–72, 378–79, 380n, 383, 385, 388, 390, 392–93, 397, 400, 409, 417n, 419n,

- antiquities (cont.)
 444n7, 444n8, 445, 447, 456, 459,
 460–61, 464–65, 468, 472–73, 475, 479,
 485, 492, 509, 514–15, 523n, 524, 526,
 541, 542n, 552, 562n, 577, 578
- antithesis 11, 71n, 105, 287
- Apollo Belvedere* 373, 376
- apotheosis 120n, 123n, 124, 126, 277, 359, 400
- applied ornament 415, 423, 470, 472, 526,
 527, 528, 531, 534, 545
- aptum* 48, 115n
- Apulian vases 145, 146n
- arabesque 149n, 486, 494, 500, 510, 534, 545,
 563, 577n, 582
- Arabic language 347n
- arch, see also triumphal arch 140, 153n,
 154n, 159, 162n, 193, 194, 198, 312, 362–3,
 375–76, 379, 385, 393n, 397, 400, 431n,
 438–39, 455, 468n, 514n, 515, 524, 531,
 540, 549–50, 551, 557, 583
- archaeology 369, 399, 468, 526, 552
- archaism 88–89, 492
- architectural orders 113n, 185, 295, 296nn63,
 65, 326, 468n, 486
- architecture 6, 9, 12, 17, 23n, 30n, 39n, 113n,
 121, 140, 174, 176, 180, 184–94, 198, 247,
 256, 257, 298n, 321n, 326, 331, 332n,
 374n, 437–38, 444, 446n, 448, 464, 465,
 470, 474–75, 479, 483, 484, 486, 492, 535,
 536–37, 551–52, 562n, 578
- fictive architecture 14, 16, 311–12, 329n,
 330–31, 337n, 356–57, 360, 362–63, 395,
 431, 448, 465n, 498, 515, 527n, 531, 540,
 586, 588, 594
- argos* 102
- argutia, argutezza* 412n, 417, 424, 427
- Aristotelian tradition, Aristotelianism 3, 13,
 14, 15, 17, 29, 35, 36, 37, 49, 74, 81–84, 85,
 91, 109, 112, 152n, 173, 179, 182, 185, 187,
 191n, 221n, 234, 235, 236, 263, 264, 265,
 281–82, 283n, 288, 291n, 296, 300, 303,
 317, 421n, 424, 425, 428, 429, 456, 493,
 494, 500–1, 502, 504
- arithmetical proportion 81, 187
- arms 101, 102, 131, 133, 134, 156, 253, 360, 365,
 386n, 413, 422, 485, 559n, 586
- Asclepius* 59n, 419, 420, 426
- Asiatic style 91n, 97n, 104, 192
- astrology 39n, 194, 197, 198, 246, 279, 299,
 302, 570n,
- Atticism 88, 91n, 97n, 156n, 166n
- attribute 21–22, 54, 73–74, 88, 133, 209, 337,
 338, 362, 424, 435, 544, 570
- auctoritas* 468
- aura* 5, 131, 145, 207, 307, 464
- aureole 123, 198, 207, 208, 510n
- axial disequilibrium 288
- axial organisation 121n, 149n, 325, 375,
 393–95, 397–98, 400–2, 438
- Baltimore panel (“Ideal City”) 323
- baptism 161, 562
- Baptism of Christ 563
- beauty, see also *kalon* 2, 6n, 8, 14, 21, 23n, 27,
 28n, 29, 45n, 50, 51–52, 68, 78, 79, 84, 92,
 93, 94, 98n, 99, 113–15, 155, 156, 162, 165,
 174n, 177, 178n, 179, 180, 185, 187, 190n,
 193, 194, 206, 207, 208, 212, 230n, 243n,
 259, 261, 262n, 263, 269, 284–85, 288,
 292–93, 294n, 295, 298n, 301n, 306,
 323n, 326, 337, 341n, 343, 368n, 397,
 448, 486–87, 492, 503, 566, 591, 595, 598
- beauty of world and works of creation
 15, 30, 37, 39, 40, 43, 46, 47, 49, 62, 64n,
 188, 224–25, 296n, 316, 317
- definitions of 1, 6–7, 48–49, 90–91, 168n,
 189–91, 224, 264, 266–67, 268, 270–73,
 287, 289, 315, 453–54
- Belvedere Torso 454, 514n
- bestiary 57, 420, 523n
- bewilderment, in aesthetic experience 161,
 162, 164, 461, 525
- Blue Vase (Pompeii) 139
- Bible
- Old Testament
- Genesis 10, 12, 26n, 32n, 41, 44, 45,
 59n, 562
- Exodus 123n, 270n, 562
- Kings 123n
- Maccabees 41n
- Ecclesiastes 43
- Canticle 210n, 260n
- Wisdom 39n
- Isaiah 158n, 388n
- Lamentations 388
- Baruch 388n
- Ezekiel 64n, 123n
- New Testament
- John 64n, 315n, 423n,
- Romans 44, 50

- Galatians 57n
 Colossians 153n
 James 153n
 Revelation 123n, 153n
 Borghese Dancers 540n, 544
 Borghese relief 523–24
 boundlessness, the boundless 24, 180, 181
 brevity 233, 237, 240, 250, 408, 409–10, 414
 burlesque (literary) 500n, 526, 574–77
 Byzantine architecture 161
 art 123, 163, 464
 decoration 161n, 312, 525–26
 descriptions of artworks (see also *ekphrasis*) 155, 157, 161–62, 163n, 165, 166, 167, 168, 176–77, 181, 304n, 310, 417n, 454, 461
 iconography 157, 174n
 mosaic 310n, 464
 regalia 154
 scholars and scholarship 176, 180, 221n, 408, 461, 464
- Cabbala 242n, 244, 419
 Sephiroth 248n
 calligraphic line 492, 533, 579
 cameo 139, 525, 528, 529, 530, 531n, 534, 537, 543n, 544n
 candelabra, as motif 150, 332, 360, 362, 413, 445, 494, 512, 515n, 518, 521, 523–24, 530, 531, 533, 535, 537, 540, 573
 capital 145n84, 145n85, 194, 312, 379n, 391, 413, 444, 445, 446, 469, 484, 485n, 510, 511, 521
capricci, capriccio 300n, 301, 321, 392, 527n, 530n, 541, 573n, 576, 577, 579n,
 carnival 359n, 365, 372, 373, 376, 395n, 441
 cartouche 413, 414, 430, 481, 482, 484, 586
 categories of predication, see also under
 Aristotle 15, 81, 117, 207, 234, 235, 236n17, 236n20, 244, 248n, 289n, 427, 572
 cause 38, 39n, 57n, 79, 117, 135n, 182, 236n, 241, 243, 264, 288n, 577n
 efficient cause 38, 79, 243
 final cause 79, 235, 348, 509, 572
 formal cause 79, 284
 material cause 508
cento 218, 459–60, 526n
 ceremony, ceremonial 9, 122, 132, 133, 138, 144, 156n, 168, 176, 193, 194n, 197, 198, 202, 203n, 230, 279, 295n, 350, 354, 356, 358, 364, 369, 370n, 371, 373, 375, 440, 448, 514n, 562n, 599
 chameleon, as metaphor for variability 233, 277, 306
 chaos 62, 66n, 223, 287n, 324, 341, 341, 343, 388, 509, 534, 545, 551, 551, 553, 571, 572, 575, 576, 577, 583n
 chariot, see also *ochēma* 122n, 123–24, 140, 198, 201n, 219n, 250n, 448, 525, 531, 536n
 triumphal chariot 123n, 127n, 131n, 352n, 359n, 360, 364n, 373, 378, 524
charis 88, 91, 92, 93n, 134, 290
chiaroscuro 91, 93n, 265, 306, 307n, 528, 531
 chimera 262n, 503n, 535, 537, 569, 570, 574
chōra 33–34, 35n
 chorus, *choros* 28, 31n41, 31n42, 32–33, 37n, 42, 47n, 53, 105, 121, 178, 181, 212n, 216, 217, 322, 333, 448, 554, 558, 565, 566
 chthonic 32, 344, 401, 536, 537, 563
 cicada 87, 146, 148, 509n
 Ciceronianism, Ciceronian style 61, 173, 185, 250, 251–53, 257, 258, 259, 261, 264, 383, 469n
 circus 44, 155n, 193, 198, 376, 562, 563n, 566
claritas 1, 2n, 165n, 191, 191n, 273, 454n
 classicism 13, 89, 146n, 287n, 493, 495
Cleopatra statue, see also Belvedere under
 Vatican 372, 373n, 381–82, 562n
 Castiglione's poem on *Cleopatra*, see under Castiglione
clipaeus, imago clipeata 124, 153, 180, 182, 365
 Codex Coner 374n
 Codex Escorialensis 444, 462, 463, 465n, 469n, 484, 494, 525, 529n, 531n,
 cogitation, *vis cogitativa* 4, 114, 167, 284, 298, 300n, 501, 573
 coins 151n, 324, 364, 372n, 416, 422, 427n, 469, 524n, 543, 544n, 557n
 colour 1n, 6, 12, 13, 22, 27n, 37n, 61n, 62, 74, 79, 90, 93, 102n, 107, 155n, 156n, 157, 158, 159n, 160, 163, 165, 178, 189, 191n, 216, 218, 247n, 266, 273n, 279, 281, 290n, 297n, 299n, 303, 304–13, 328n, 337, 338, 354, 360n, 417n, 418n, 420, 422, 458,

- colour (cont.)
 460, 461n, 465, 475, 477, 484, 487, 509,
 512, 521n, 525, 528, 530, 531, 533, 535n,
 544, 549, 551, 579, 583, 586, 588, 591, 592
 as rhetorical term 63n, 73, 74n, 91, 93, 97,
 99n, 104, 107, 219, 220, 225, 229, 230, 409
- columns 124n, 125n, 126n, 139, 159n, 193,
 295n, 327, 366, 368, 391n, 413, 439n,
 444n, 448, 452n, 460n, 468, 521, 541,
 549, 588
 historiated columns, see also Trajan's
 Column 368
- comedy 83n, 229–30, 346, 537
- comic scene 323n
- Commodus attired as Hercules* 378
- communitas* 112, 116, 137
- compartitio* 187
- concettismo* 411n, 422, 429
- conchetto* 282–84, 300n, 301n, 337, 425–26,
 429–30, 431n, 433n, 440, 477, 571n, 573
conchetto universale see universal concept
- concinnitas* 104, 106n, 178, 189, 190, 191–93,
 270–71, 427
- concoris discordia* 224, 266–68, 294, 301n,
 332, 341
- constantia* 113n, 114n, 115, 137, 266, 269
- contemplation 15, 29, 30, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44,
 48, 50, 55, 62n, 84, 130, 136n, 161, 164,
 165, 167, 193, 195, 196, 205n, 209, 210, 212,
 227, 254, 263, 264, 271, 273, 275, 277, 316,
 342, 358, 368, 392, 422, 454n, 503, 550,
 552, 595
- contrapposto* 121n, 285, 287–88, 350, 352n,
 581
- contraries, contrariety 22–24, 26n, 27–28,
 29, 35–36, 37, 38n, 41, 47, 51n, 53, 69–70,
 74, 79, 82, 105, 135n, 149, 235, 236n, 241,
 243, 260, 261, 266–67, 268, 281, 287n,
 288, 293, 302n, 341, 342, 350, 428, 460,
 597
 contrary qualities 11, 26, 35, 288, 427
- convenientia* 113n, 114, 178, 181, 184, 192n, 193,
 253
- copia* 104, 108n, 135n, 205, 224n, 233n, 234n,
 237, 238n, 245, 250, 260n, 288, 364, 370,
 398n, 408, 410, 414, 485, 572, 575, 577, 586
- cornucopia 146n, 516, 569
- corona* 32, 124n, 133, 142, 201, 216, 360, 556
- Corpus Hermeticum* 419
- cortegiana* 261, 269n, 275
- cortegiano*, see under Castiglione
- Coryciana 380nn107–8, 381n
- cosmetic, cosmetics 11, 14, 15, 24, 67, 68, 71,
 74, 75, 97, 112, 118, 240, 252–53, 254, 258,
 279n, 596, 597, 598
- cosmogony 34n, 69, 79
- cosmology 11, 14, 24, 26n, 31n, 34, 40, 46, 49,
 54, 59, 61, 64, 206, 213, 216, 217, 229, 230,
 244, 332, 336, 346, 592
- costume, see also dress, garment, robe, veil
 61, 131n, 213, 250, 252, 277, 278, 422n, 440
- creatio ex nihilo* 41, 42n, 48n
- cyclicality 47, 111n, 127, 151, 152, 181, 205, 212,
 213, 259, 386, 437, 438, 565, 566
- daimōn* 53, 54, 55, 271n, 490, 505n
- damage 342, 393, 400, 445, 446n, 455, 459,
 460, 476, 485n
- dance 9, 10, 23n, 25n, 30–32, 35, 42, 43, 47,
 51n, 105n, 121, 166, 178–79, 181, 182n, 210,
 212, 216, 269, 278, 322, 331n, 332–33, 334,
 335n, 448, 554, 565
- decay 44, 47, 106n, 141, 266, 267n, 342, 367n,
 385, 391, 400, 446, 453, 455, 456, 459,
 537,
- decor* 48n, 113n, 134, 452
- décor 14, 120, 128, 134, 255, 256, 438, 500, 534,
 597
- decorum 48, 49, 76, 80, 83n, 92, 108, 111–15,
 118, 119, 137, 178–79, 185–86, 189, 192,
 252, 260–61, 266, 269, 277, 291, 292,
 294–96, 322, 325, 331, 379, 470, 500, 553,
 578, 595
- deformation 100n, 341, 482n, 507, 508, 526,
 570, 595
- Della Valle antiquities collection 372, 388n,
 393n, 472–73, 515, 542n, 556, 559
- demiurge 34, 38, 60n, 264
- dependent beauty see *pulchritudo adhaerens*
- dialectic 29, 30, 35, 66, 116–17, 231, 232n,
 234–35, 236, 238, 239, 240n, 242n, 338,
 340, 341, 432, 466, 591
 in Aristotelian tradition 29, 82, 112, 117,
 183n, 221
 in Platonic tradition 29, 66, 77–78, 79, 81,
 164–65, 166
- dialogue, dialogic 27, 60, 72n, 76, 77, 78, 113,
 136, 137, 138, 167, 185, 188, 199, 205n, 206,

- 232n, 260, 322, 332, 354, 357, 358, 374,
380, 383, 393, 399, 429, 434, 439, 565n,
594
- disegno* 13, 244, 245, 247, 265, 281, 282–86,
290, 296, 297–98, 299n, 300, 304, 305,
307, 312, 321, 429, 430, 447, 477, 482n,
485–86, 487, 490, 492–93, 541, 554n, 570
- display 13, 14, 15n, 105, 126, 128, 129, 131,
132–33, 176, 188, 197, 203, 218, 246, 252,
254, 300, 334, 337, 341, 354, 358, 360,
362, 372n, 373, 375, 378n, 379, 381, 392n,
400, 421n, 430, 433, 438, 464, 472, 479,
501, 526, 533, 535n, 541, 542n, 549, 553,
559, 562n, 567, 573, 596
- dispositio* 116, 305
- drawing 99n, 285, 310, 444, 447, 554n
- dream 55, 68n, 166, 181, 182, 203n, 204, 205,
206, 343, 345, 348, 350, 356, 381, 502,
507n, 522, 528, 534, 571, 572, 574, 578,
579, 596
- dress, see also costume, garment, robe, veil
59, 61n, 62n, 63, 73, 83, 97n, 108n, 109,
119n, 130, 155n, 213n, 229–30, 247n, 253,
270n, 328, 360, 413, 448, 518, 544, 579n
- eclectic imitation, see also under imitation
- eclogue 237n, 342, 343
- efficacy 21, 77, 100n, 166, 180, 526, 583
- Egyptian civilisation and influence, see also
hieroglyphs 376n, 412n, 418–20, 433n,
442n, 497, 585n
- ekphrasis* (pl. *ekphraseis*) 44n, 67, 75, 84,
93n, 99, 102n, 104, 105, 157, 161–68, 177,
179, 181, 212, 225, 256, 303, 310, 344, 380,
417n, 431, 454, 461,
- eikastic mimesis 74, 301, 302n, 595
- eikonic representation 52
- elocutio* 39, 117, 136n, 239, 240, 305
- emanation 1, 50–54, 70, 93, 123, 155, 164,
165n, 191, 193, 198, 208, 224, 259, 261,
270, 271, 272, 273, 311, 312, 313–17, 321,
329, 357, 365, 454, 510
- embellishment 2, 8, 15, 40, 72, 79, 96, 99,
101n, 106, 108, 111, 192, 362n, 487n, 594
- emblem, *emblema*, see also mosaic 13, 64,
97n, 133, 163, 184, 217, 219–20, 232, 246,
275n, 344, 354, 362, 405–7, 409–10,
411–18, 420–24, 427, 429, 430–33,
438–41, 461, 479, 480, 482, 499n, 518,
544n, 571, 574, 579n, 588
- enargeia* 91, 99, 102–3, 133n, 163, 241, 259,
409
- encomium 71, 122, 178, 225n
- encyclopaedia, encyclopaedic 44, 66n, 116,
118, 184, 185, 204n, 212, 213–15, 220, 221n,
227, 229, 245, 246–48, 249, 300, 325,
342, 344, 346, 350, 357, 360, 384, 407,
442n, 460n, 469, 479, 484, 532, 540n,
545, 552, 554, 563, 577, 578
- energeia*, see also actualisation, actuality
35–36, 67, 79, 80, 83–84, 97, 102, 109,
123, 132n, 150, 177, 189n, 285, 288–89,
303, 304, 413, 419, 439, 440, 448, 530, 534
- enhancement 3, 27, 39, 67, 411, 459, 583
- enthusiasmos*, see also *furor*, *theia mania*
77, 78
- enthymeme*, see also syllogism 82n, 117, 241,
241n, 405n, 421
- ephemera 86n, 87, 156, 284, 379, 438, 485n,
487, 518,
- ephemerality, ephemeral object 44n, 88,
122, 174, 218, 274, 372, 373, 406, 422, 424,
447, 576, 597
- epic 63, 120n, 217n, 224, 229n, 237n, 252n,
292–95, 302n, 347, 360, 429n, 594–95
- epideictic rhetoric, see also sophistic rhetoric
32, 66, 75, 82, 87, 88, 93n, 94, 104–5, 108,
113, 119, 122, 126, 130, 200n, 208, 220n,
241, 255, 364, 437, 512, 525
- epigram, see also Greek Anthology 86–87,
120, 142, 156n, 157n, 217, 225, 232, 303,
309n, 350n, 367n, 372n, 373, 379–81,
383, 399n, 406–9, 411–12, 413, 414n, 416,
417, 422, 431n, 437, 438n, 439, 461, 464
- epigraphy 337, 350n, 368, 379, 380n, 395,
406, 514
- epitaph 348, 406–7
- equivocation, in poetics and metaphor 206,
207, 516, 569, 570
- essence 5n, 21, 23, 35n, 36n, 55, 67, 71, 73, 79,
296, 304n, 318, 427, 482, 504, 574
- essential form 8, 109, 304
- estimation (inner sense) 4, 300n
- ethics, see also *Nicomachean Ethics* under
Aristotle 81, 82, 118, 183n, 184, 185, 189,
221, 225, 252

- Etimasia* 563n
 Etruscan culture 132n, 419n, 510n, 585n
 etymology 65, 135n, 216n, 217, 228, 236n, 405n
eurythmia 323
 exemplar, exemplarity 3n, 12, 15, 38, 44, 57n, 68n, 78, 83, 91, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 106, 113, 115, 136, 137, 168, 176, 178, 204, 205, 208, 216, 222, 223n, 227, 269, 283, 284, 295, 297, 298, 301, 303, 316, 325, 342, 362, 364, 367, 368, 390, 392, 422, 423, 427, 435, 453, 469, 475, 476, 524, 541, 563
exornatio mundi (see also *ornatus mundi*) 12, 15n, 32, 34, 37–38, 41, 43–44, 45n, 46, 47n, 48, 55, 59, 157, 161, 212, 213, 215, 227, 231, 247, 254, 264, 285, 294, 296n, 307, 393, 428, 459, 597, 598
exornatio as rhetorical term 99, 239
 fable 49, 56, 58–59, 62, 63, 64, 104, 145n, 173, 184, 205–6, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215n, 223, 225, 230, 262, 264, 265, 275, 277, 278, 285, 302n, 308n, 323, 346, 347, 348, 357n, 358, 420, 431
facciata museo 470, 472, 559
 fallacies of sight, see also optical correction 75n, 317, 318, 320, 322, 323
 fame 66, 70n, 88, 120n, 200, 201, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 217, 218, 224, 244n, 256, 261n, 359n, 360, 363, 364, 365, 366, 406, 421, 440, 465, 512, 514
 fantastic mimesis, see also imitation 74, 98, 103, 108, 121, 189, 300n, 301, 302n, 322, 511, 579, 589, 595
 fantasy, see also imagination 4, 29, 55, 57, 63, 68, 71, 102, 103–4, 109, 149, 150, 161, 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 182, 209, 210, 232, 255n, 257nn100, 102, 258, 263, 264, 273, 284, 297–99, 300n, 301, 302n, 308, 317, 323n, 327, 332, 356, 357–58, 369, 392, 429, 430, 446, 447, 454, 455n, 456, 477, 482, 484, 485, 486, 493, 499, 501, 502–3, 505, 507, 511, 512, 516, 518, 526, 527, 528, 531, 533, 534, 535, 537, 543, 553, 570, 572, 573, 574, 576, 578, 579, 581, 586, 588, 591, 596, 597
 festoon 139, 339n, 448, 458, 473n, 510, 512, 531, 533, 538, 541n, 545, 579, 582, 588
figura 45, 57, 61, 63n, 66, 97, 98, 99, 102, 109, 175n, 223n, 241, 243n, 272n, 275n, 287, 409n, 430, 433, 544n, 571
finitio 190
 Flavian ornament 146n
 flexion 100, 109, 288n
Florentine Picture Chronicle 448, 450
 flowers, see also garland 6, 31n, 44, 59, 61n, 127, 145, 151, 152n, 156, 161, 188, 210, 211n, 212, 213, 222n, 230n, 247n, 254n, 261, 262n, 272, 293, 308, 427n, 569
 as literary metaphor or term for ornament 87–88, 92n, 104n, 157n, 160, 162n, 208–9, 212, 216, 222n, 224, 252–53, 258, 262n, 390, 417n, 423n,
fogliami, see also vegetal ornament 462, 475, 478, 492, 525, 529, 531
 foreshortening 100, 321, 325, 326, 327
 forms made by chance 417, 456, 501–10, 577
 fortune, Fortune, see also *tyché* 43, 107, 129n, 130, 222n, 257, 267, 367, 368, 391, 393, 429n, 508n, 574
 Fossombrone sketchbook 515n
 fragment, fragmentation 5, 13, 14, 16, 24n, 25, 31n, 39, 87, 97, 155, 163, 173, 183–84, 217, 238, 278, 343–44, 350, 354, 356, 358, 360, 362, 365, 383–85, 388, 390, 392–94, 401, 405, 407, 409–11, 416, 428, 442, 444n, 445, 447–48, 452–55, 458–60, 464, 468, 472, 473n, 475–76, 479, 482, 485, 494, 518, 526, 535, 540, 553–54, 567, 571, 574, 578, 596
 frame, framing 3, 6, 8, 14, 22, 28, 34, 55, 69, 70, 79, 124, 137–38, 143, 145n, 146, 149, 190n, 197–98, 208, 213, 240, 261, 269, 279, 311–12, 332–33, 336, 338–41, 362, 367, 374n, 376n, 393, 405, 414, 431, 438, 446n, 448, 455, 458, 464n, 482, 484, 494, 499, 521, 527n, 528, 531, 533, 535, 537–38, 540, 544–45, 549, 551, 562–63, 566–67, 573, 575, 582–83, 586, 588, 591, 592, 594
 frenzy 358n, 528
 frieze 105n, 138, 140, 146n, 149n, 151, 152, 168, 257, 354, 407, 431, 444n, 448, 461n, 468, 469, 470, 472, 473n, 484, 518, 523n, 528n, 529, 562, 565n, 588
 frigidify 70, 82, 238

- frons scaenae* 194, 394
 free beauty see *pulchritudo vaga*
 funeral 142, 201, 243, 350n, 359
 funeral oration 122, 176, 180n, 201, 452
furor, see also *enthusiasmos*, *theia mania*
 19n, 223, 225, 257, 292n, 302, 336, 530,
 569, 576
- Galatea* (Raphael) 262n, 297, 462, 595
 gallery 156n, 158, 337, 438, 537, 541, 543,
 562n, 563n, 578, 588, 591
 garden 43n, 88, 104, 118, 134, 136, 143, 194n,
 199n, 207n, 217n, 252, 254–57, 261, 343,
 350, 357, 359, 360, 371, 373, 378, 379–81,
 383–84, 391, 393, 395, 396n, 397, 398,
 400–2, 406, 437n, 472–73, 474, 494, 514,
 532, 537, 538n, 541, 548, 549, 555, 576,
 583n
 garland, see also flowers 15, 32, 86, 87–88,
 96, 107, 120, 122, 124, 137, 139, 141–43, 145,
 149, 178, 179, 202, 203n, 204n, 205, 206n,
 207, 208, 209, 216–18, 220, 222n, 224,
 225, 229, 252, 337n, 339, 365n, 391n, 448,
 510, 512, 515, 521, 571n
 garment, see also costume, dress, robe, veil
 62n, 97, 107n, 230
 gender 15–16, 72n
 genre 14, 83, 85, 86, 104, 119, 120, 217, 220n,
 224, 227, 229n, 231, 252n, 264, 265,
 290–92, 294, 296, 302–3, 342–43, 359,
 379, 422, 492, 578n, 592, 594–95
 genus, see also *primum in genere* 15, 35n,
 135n, 235n, 236n, 241, 250, 290–96, 427
 geometric proportion 81
 geometry 9, 10n, 29, 190n, 316, 317, 321, 322,
 326, 484, 555
gestio, see also *actio*, *pronuntiatio* 109, 117
 gesture 91n, 97, 108n, 113, 114, 192n, 259, 269,
 270n, 272, 278, 290n, 304, 329, 330n, 448
 Gothic architecture 460
 Gothic ornament 9, 495n, 497n
 grace, *grazia* 1n, 3n, 10, 12, 13, 14, 32, 38, 62n,
 63n, 84, 88, 91, 93, 94, 101, 109, 114, 134,
 208, 210, 211n, 212, 219n, 259, 261, 262n,
 266–70, 271, 271n, 272–74, 281, 284–85,
 287–90, 296, 297n, 304, 306n, 338, 352,
 440, 447, 486, 490, 518, 534, 569, 583,
 586n, 591, 592,
 grammar 85, 221, 227, 337n, 345n, 571
- grammaticus* 221–22, 231
 Greek Anthology, see also epigram,
 Planudean Anthology 86–88, 157n, 209,
 217, 276n, 303, 407–9
 Greek art including coins 22n, 23n, 88, 89n,
 94–95, 98n, 133n, 134n, 146n, 371n, 497,
 557n
 Greek ceremonies, festivals and games
 122–23
 Greek language 4, 11, 26n, 47n, 89, 102n, 126n,
 192n, 213n, 217, 218n, 312n, 313, 334n, 345,
 346n, 347n, 373n, 419, 456, 508n, 572
 Greek literature, see also Greek Anthology
 95, 157n, 175, 176n, 177n, 183n, 202, 209,
 224n, 254n, 278n, 406n, 408, 409n,
 418n, 422
 Greek orators and rhetoric, see Demosthenes,
 Dionysius, Gorgias, Hermogenes, Isaeus,
 Lysias, Thucydides
 Greek Patristics 461
 Greek philosophy, see Aristotelian tradition,
 Neoplatonism, Platonic thought and
 tradition, Stoicism and under individual
 names
 Greek thought 9, 10, 70n, 95, 113, 218
 grisaille 458, 521, 531n, 537n
grotesche, grotesquework 14, 149, 239, 302n,
 327, 340, 341, 362, 414, 441, 444, 445,
 465, 468, 469, 475, 484–85, 488n, 492,
 493, 494–536, 537–91, 596
 grotto 219n, 328, 332, 341, 343, 366, 367n,
 394–95, 396n, 398–400, 509, 532n, 536,
 542, 548–51, 556, 562, 567, 577n, 583n,
 597
- habitat 40, 48n, 66n, 137–38, 140, 158, 186,
 213, 254, 256, 261, 294, 384, 386, 484, 516,
 541, 543, 582n, 597
habitus 97, 109, 112, 277n, 300
 hand, as instrument of eloquence and artifice
 40, 108n, 239, 282, 285, 286, 447
harmonia mundi see also *musica mundana*,
 musica universalis 9, 334, 336, 553, 593
 harmonic intervals 29
 Hebrew language 346n, 347n, 373n, 422n,
 481n, 508n, 572
 hexaemeral literature 10, 12, 15, 26, 30, 34,
 40, 41, 43, 46, 48, 50, 57, 59, 61n, 130,
 158n, 162n, 168, 176, 186, 193, 211, 215,

- hexaemeral literature (cont.)
 227, 227, 246, 294, 307n, 344, 384, 428n,
 543, 553, 562, 563n, 593, 596
- hieroglyphs 13, 245, 247n, 344, 345, 354, 355,
 358, 362n, 373, 411–12, 414n, 416–17,
 418–20, 421, 422, 424n, 428, 429n, 430,
 432, 440, 441, 518, 528n, 534, 553, 570,
 571n, 572–73, 578n, 585, 586n
- historicism, historicist 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 88,
 89n, 94, 97, 442, 464n, 479, 494–95, 500,
 595, 596–98
- Homeric Hymns
 To Apollo 31n
 To Demeter 254nn91, 94
- honour 40, 85n, 134n, 142, 155n, 186, 200,
 272, 359, 452
- hora* 92, 94
- humanitas* 175, 181n, 225n, 226n, 234
- hybrid 395, 507, 518, 531, 563, 570, 571, 575
- Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* 63, 148n, 255,
 257n, 343–58, 360, 373, 379, 380–81, 383,
 406, 416, 447, 460, 518, 520, 521, 544n
- iconoclasm 15, 174n
- idea, in Platonic tradition, see also Platonic
 form 38, 62n, 98, 104, 115, 166–67, 207,
 208n, 262, 264–65, 281–84, 290–92,
 294–301, 306, 340, 430, 447, 479, 492, 503,
 505, 509, 570, 579, 595
- “Ideal City” panels 323–24
- ignudi* 337, 338, 339
- illumination 50n, 62, 78, 94, 96, 161, 191, 296,
 311n, 318, 326n, 329, 346, 380n, 507, 537
 book illumination 206n, 386, 475,
 529–30, 545n
 as achieved by ornament 15, 31, 51, 70,
 98, 100n, 180, 259, 273, 364, 465
- illusion 12, 17, 61, 67–69, 74–75, 84, 86, 91,
 93–94, 98, 103, 107–8, 121, 130n, 141, 143,
 159n, 164, 167–69, 229, 254, 255–58, 280,
 301, 303, 305, 308–9, 312, 318, 321, 323,
 326–27, 336–38, 340, 358, 456, 477–79,
 482, 484, 499, 505n39, 505n43, 507, 511,
 531, 533, 535, 537, 574, 583, 589, 591, 596
- illusionism 74–75, 86, 91, 120, 476, 498, 505,
 521, 522n, 595
- illusionist architecture, illusionist decoration
 14, 16, 68, 94, 198, 363, 395, 433, 438, 472,
 479, 488, 497–99, 524, 528–29, 531, 537,
 540, 574, 579, 582–83, 586, 588, 594,
 596–97
- illustration 86, 120, 279n, 345–46, 350, 352,
 357n, 364, 365n, 370n, 376n, 417, 448,
 470, 482, 545n
- imagination, see also fantasy 4n, 6n, 57, 71,
 102, 103n, 109, 163n, 165, 168, 206, 210,
 233, 247, 264, 298–300, 304, 329, 357,
 384, 392, 413, 447n, 458, 490, 501–2,
 503n, 505n, 509, 511, 529, 530, 534, 571
 combinatory imagination 14, 168, 300n,
 301, 304, 430, 501, 507n, 522n, 535, 544
- imitare–ritrarre* distinction 289
- imitation, see also fantastic mimesis 3, 13,
 49, 56n, 68n, 71n, 74n, 82n, 85–88, 89n,
 96, 120, 136–37, 166, 180, 183, 193, 200,
 217, 222, 226, 232, 243, 249, 251, 253, 259,
 263, 265, 274, 276–77, 281n, 282, 284,
 289n, 291, 296n, 300–1, 302n, 303,
 341–42, 368n, 390, 407, 409n, 430, 453,
 456, 458, 476, 504, 521n, 526n, 531, 536,
 555, 570n, 577n, 578, 581, 583, 595–96
 eclectic or varied 173, 221n, 224, 229–30,
 252, 262, 264–65,
 exclusive or selective, see also
 Ciceronianism 207 (Petrarchism),
 245, 261, 264, 343–44, 347n,
- impresa* 13, 217n, 219n, 275, 354n, 365, 406–7,
 411n, 412, 414, 417n, 420–31, 433–34, 437,
 438n, 440–41, 482, 499n, 571n, 573, 574
- ingenium, ingegno*, see also talent 70, 176,
 237n, 247, 299, 302, 346n, 408n, 421n,
 423, 426, 427, 430, 440n, 485n, 503,
 576n
- inner senses: see cogitation, estimation,
 fantasy, memory, *sensus communis*
- inscription 86, 123n, 153n107, 153n108, 165,
 193n, 312, 347n, 360, 362, 373n, 378n,
 380n, 384, 394n, 406–7, 408n, 411n, 433,
 434n, 437, 439, 456, 464, 508n, 559, 562,
 571, 572
- insertion 173, 220, 280, 345, 405, 410–11, 421,
 460, 577n
- inspiration 32, 77, 88, 103, 167, 207, 223,
 224n, 226n, 269, 343, 433n, 562n,
 575–76,
- instrument, instrumentality 40, 48, 49, 76,
 84–85, 89, 108–9, 123, 133, 136, 143n, 175,
 179n, 195, 234, 237n, 238, 242, 243,

- 247–48, 258, 269n, 277, 278, 300n, 318,
320–22, 362, 433, 437, 439, 448, 484, 510,
515n, 531, 543, 545, 578
- intarsia 219, 378n, 414n, 418n, 465, 499, 524,
530n
- integritas* 1, 191, 273, 454n, 455
- integumenta* 56, 58–61, 215n, 245
- intellect 4, 6, 7n, 14, 16, 17, 27, 29, 30, 43n,
50n, 57n, 58, 60n, 74, 76, 80, 96, 101, 115,
135, 164, 165, 167, 182, 185, 195, 218, 252n,
255, 259n, 263, 264, 282–84, 296–301,
305–6, 315nn157–58, 425–26, 447, 483,
501–2, 554–55, 573
- active intellect 284
- material intellect 427n
- passive intellect 284, 298
- practical intellect 283n, 284
- intellectual principle 36n, 50, 55n
- intelligible species 284, 429
- intentional form 289, 296n
- interlace, *entrelace* 23, 530, 575,
- intermedi* 327, 328n, 329n, 332–36
- Intermedi to La Pellegrina* 333–36, 592
- inventio*, see also dialectic, rhetoric 116, 117n
- involutum* 60, 200, 207, 556
- ivy, see also garland, tendril 7, 87, 128, 151,
202–3, 217n, 379, 541, 575
- jewels, gems 33, 47n, 102, 131, 153n, 154n,
155–56, 180, 217n, 229n, 231n, 235, 273,
275n, 310–11, 316–17, 327–28, 329n,
347n, 357, 412n, 464, 524n, 543, 551
- as metaphor for ornament 102n, 104n,
225, 305, 354, 405n, 409–10, 411n
- judgement 6–7, 8, 32n, 72, 80–81, 91, 96,
98n, 99, 156, 167, 183, 185n, 189–90, 226,
232, 239, 244–45, 264, 265, 267, 281–82,
286–87, 298–99, 304, 408, 427n, 431n,
437n, 440, 458n, 483n, 501, 509
- Junius Bassus sarcophagus 140n
- kaïros* 80, 81, 92, 94, 590
- kalon* 48–49, 90
- kosmos* 9–11, 12, 21, 25–26, 29, 30n, 36, 37,
42n, 44, 49, 68–71, 75, 76, 105, 111, 134,
213–15, 227, 279, 335, 427, 565, 599
- kosmiotes* 76, 427
- Krater of Salpion 143
- Kunstwollen* 5
- landscape 48n, 92n, 105, 121, 137, 138, 140n,
149, 161, 182, 207n, 224, 256, 274, 308,
312, 375n, 384–85, 390n, 391–92, 401,
407, 454, 482, 498n, 504n, 531, 540,
578n, 579
- Laocoon* 446n
- larva* 222n, 510, 574
- laurel 122, 125n, 152n, 153n, 200–3, 205–8,
217n, 225, 378n, 379, 465n, 571n
- laureation, poetic coronation 200, 201n9,
201n10, 202–3, 204n, 378
- leggiadria* 273, 296n, 485n
- legitimate construction, see also perspective
13, 281, 309, 311, 312, 321n, 323n
- Liber pontificalis* 153
- liberal arts 58, 62n, 63nn156–57, 64, 65n, 66,
215, 221, 282
- quadrivium 62n, 317, 318
- trivium 62n, 235
- license 230, 492, 503, 567, 583, 596, 597
- light 102, 107–8, 153, 155, 156, 159–61, 162n,
163–65, 181–82, 189, 191n, 206, 208, 212,
261, 266, 269, 273–74, 276, 281, 283–84,
299, 308–12, 313–21, 329, 344, 399, 402,
430, 505, 507, 525, 528, 531, 535, 536–37,
540, 549, 567, 579, 588
- as rhetorical metaphor 2, 70, 90, 93–94,
96–97, 100–3, 118, 123, 153–54, 155n, 176,
183, 192–93, 216, 237–38, 241n, 409, 592
- in accounts of creation and *exornatio
mundi* 26, 41, 43, 47, 57n, 64n, 126n
- in Platonic tradition 1, 50–52, 55, 164,
166, 262n, 263, 271–74, 296, 313–16, 320,
329, 336, 365, 454
- lumen* 2, 70n, 310, 317, 321
- lux* 189n, 283n, 310, 315, 317
- light metaphysics 52, 164, 281, 313–16, 321
- limit, as property of ornament 11, 22–24,
26–30, 35–36, 41, 51–52, 86, 141, 443, 591
- limitlessness, the limitless, see also
boundlessness, the unlimited 24, 28, 29
- linea serpentinata*, line of grace 109, 273,
285, 288, 534, 569, 583
- line of beauty 23n
- lineamenta* 99n, 185–87
- literary microcosm, literary organicism 229,
294
- liveliness 67–68, 74, 121, 142n, 150, 180, 269,
279, 285, 296, 299, 303, 308, 325, 338,

- liveliness (cont.)
 339, 374n, 510, 511, 518, 527, 530, 534,
 583, 591, 592
- loci argumentorum, loci communes* see under
 topics
- locus amoenus* 106, 180, 207, 237, 254–55,
 259, 274, 292, 357
- loggia 193, 198, 312n, 378, 397n, 398n, 435,
 470, 498, 499, 499n, 523, 524, 531, 533,
 536, 537, 540, 541, 546, 547, 549–51,
 557n, 558–59, 562–63, 566n, 579n
- logic 29n, 112, 183, 231, 234–35, 240n, 241,
 292n, 323n, 419, 424n, 426, 570, 571
- logos* 26, 38–39, 69n, 71, 73, 96n, 161, 180–81,
 264n, 543
- ludi* 198n, 526n, 562n, 566n
- lymphaeum* 562
- lyric poetry, see under poetry
- maenad 127n, 144, 145n, 148, 209, 285
- magic 53–55, 71n, 197, 242n, 245–46, 249,
 250, 257, 343, 419–20, 426n, 527
- majolica 531n, 543
- mandorla 124, 153, 364–65, 462n, 510, 544
- Manicheanism 507n
- maniera* 273, 286, 287, 293n, 299, 337, 488,
 490, 530n
- manner, in artistic style and rhetoric 13, 14,
 16, 80, 81, 90, 106, 186, 208, 212, 223n,
 227, 237, 249, 266, 267n, 275, 285, 295n,
 296n, 299, 304, 322, 447, 474n, 479, 485,
 486, 488, 492, 493, 514, 532
- Mannerism, mannerist 245, 287n, 307, 333,
 341, 343, 400, 414, 435n, 441, 478, 485n,
 492, 528n, 553, 589
- marble 144, 120n, 146, 155, 157–61, 162n, 163n,
 164, 166, 167, 200, 201, 218, 312, 372n,
 384, 405, 417n, 452n, 456n, 458, 460–61,
 465, 475, 503, 512, 521, 526
- marvellous, *meraviglia* 84, 105, 117, 131, 240n,
 277, 294n, 302, 332–33, 336, 426–27,
 428n
- mask, see also *larva* 128, 137, 140, 142–43,
 252, 255, 257, 276–77, 339, 395n, 396n,
 414, 439–41, 448, 470, 482n, 483, 484,
 510, 512, 521, 531n, 558, 563, 565n, 569,
 574, 579, 582, 588
- masque, *mascherata* 132, 213, 331n, 440, 487
- matter 28, 33, 34–39, 41, 42n, 45, 47,
 50–51, 64n, 73, 79, 84, 163–64, 177n, 186,
 187, 212, 223–24, 229n, 235, 247n, 250n,
 271n, 53, 271n, 54, 304n, 314–15, 340, 341,
 424, 428, 504–5, 509, 530n, 553, 570, 577
- mean, the 81, 187, 189, 235, 291
- measure 11, 25, 27–30, 32, 36n, 39, 47, 72, 74,
 81–82, 113, 115–16, 137, 165, 168n, 178,
 180–81, 182, 187–88, 192–93, 207, 268,
 269n, 272, 273n, 274, 285, 288, 295,
 316–17, 331n, 333n, 426n, 429
- medal 354n, 364, 397n, 416n, 421, 422, 439,
 478, 524n, 543
- medallion 124, 125n, 146, 149n, 470n, 524n,
 525, 594
- mediation 2–3, 49, 54, 174, 362, 500, 509,
 545, 551, 567, 591, 592, 594
- melancholy 299–300, 342
- memoria* 327, 350, 367, 369, 518, 554–55, 566
- memory (faculty) 4, 205, 242, 273n, 316n,
 350, 357, 367, 369, 455, 501, 555, 576
 local memory 136, 209n, 367, 416, 433,
- memory (division of rhetoric) 116n
- metamorphosis 145, 146n, 207, 232, 257–58,
 400–1, 479, 492, 505, 507, 508, 526, 528,
 535, 544, 551, 555, 567, 569–70, 572,
 574–75, 577–78, 579, 591
- metaphor 4, 13, 16, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 38, 42,
 43, 44, 51, 57n, 61, 62n, 67, 72n, 79, 83,
 84, 87–88, 89, 92n, 93n, 94, 97n, 99, 100,
 101, 104, 105n, 106, 107, 108, 114, 130n, 131,
 135, 140, 150, 154, 161, 163, 164, 167, 178,
 181, 186, 187, 205, 206, 207–8, 212, 219,
 220, 228, 230, 233, 237, 238, 239n, 241,
 245, 246, 252, 253, 257, 271, 285, 309, 313,
 315, 317, 378, 379, 384, 399, 401, 407, 409,
 420, 422, 426–28, 430, 432, 440, 441,
 446, 460, 516, 530, 537, 551, 553, 566,
 569–70, 572, 574, 575, 579, 588, 591
- metaphysics 11, 34–35, 52, 53, 79, 164, 183,
 221, 234–35, 260, 281, 313–15, 316, 321
 Aristotelian, see also under Aristotle,
 Metaphysics 83–84, 303, 500
- metonymy 239n, 241, 250
- microcosm 23, 187, 261, 294, 424
 microcosmic analogy 9, 229, 293
- miniature, miniaturisation 86, 90, 105n, 146,
 187, 219n, 220n, 338, 339, 364, 400, 415,

- 433n, 475, 481, 524–26, 533n, 535, 540, 543, 545, 563, 583
- miscellany 188, 220–22, 227–28, 390, 466, 537, 588
- Missorium of Theodosius 155n
- mnemonic art (*artes memoriae*) 136, 435n, 578
- memory figures 247n
- memory theatre 242, 244, 400, 415, 422
- mode 2, 12–13, 15, 21, 49, 56, 57, 60–61, 65–66, 70, 72n, 86, 93, 98, 102, 103, 108n, 119, 122, 126, 137, 149n, 150–51, 165–66, 179, 190, 197, 198, 205, 209–10, 213, 215n, 241, 249, 256, 272–73, 275, 278–80, 281, 285, 287n, 290, 292n, 306–7, 311, 324, 336, 339, 354, 357–59, 362, 371, 392, 394–95, 400, 410, 426, 432, 437–38, 442, 444–46, 477, 484, 492, 494, 499, 502, 512, 518, 524, 526, 530, 533–35, 552–53, 555, 563, 577, 595, 597
- model books 360, 414, 442, 444, 482, 483n, 484
- modularity, module 15, 16, 187, 262n, 295, 442, 445–46, 459
- monuments
- morphology 8n, 544
- mosaic 15, 59n, 97, 102, 107, 120, 146, 152, 153n, 155, 156n, 157n, 159, 161n, 163–64, 168, 184, 193, 216–20, 225, 231, 252, 310n, 312, 344, 354, 356, 395, 405–6, 411, 416–18, 421, 424, 431, 437n, 445, 454n, 460–66, 469n, 473, 475, 478–79, 482, 484, 521–22, 524–26, 529, 531, 534–35, 543n, 549, 557, 559, 561, 563
- motif 7–8, 10, 15, 21, 22, 23n, 29, 32, 55, 59n, 104, 124, 127–28, 138–41, 143n, 144–46, 148–50, 151n, 160, 174n, 207, 209, 213, 217, 285, 312, 337, 338, 345n, 362, 395, 401, 412, 414–415, 421, 432, 442, 443n, 444–45, 448, 452, 459, 465, 470, 480, 482, 490, 495, 497, 510, 512, 515, 518, 523, 524n, 534, 536n, 543, 544, 545, 551, 563, 569, 579, 583n, 595
- motto 235n, 232, 411, 416, 420, 421n, 422n, 423n62, 423n63, 424, 425, 426, 427n, 465n, 507n, 571, 574n
- movement, in bodies 4n, 17, 30n, 33–35, 42, 46–47, 52–53, 74, 79, 82–84, 92, 101, 108–9, 111n, 114–15, 121, 123, 162–63, 166, 168, 180–82, 189, 209–10, 213, 241, 244, 260, 268, 270n, 272–73, 279, 281, 285, 287–90, 310–11, 328, 330, 331n, 333, 336n, 350, 395–96, 399, 448, 484, 492, 502, 527n, 528, 530, 533, 569
- music 4, 6, 9, 10, 23n, 29, 30n, 31n, 51n, 89, 92, 107, 129, 183n, 188, 191n, 193n, 202, 228n, 260n, 267, 278–79, 292, 293–94, 306, 317n, 328, 329, 331n, 332–35, 336n223, 336n224, 360, 420, 427, 428n, 448, 531, 553, 555–56, 558n, 559, 562n, 563n, 565–66, 592
- chromatic music 306
- monodic music 335
- musica mundana* 9n, 62, 268
- musica universalis* 14, 16, 294
- myth 32n, 50n, 53–55, 60, 66, 68n, 123, 129, 154, 156n, 181, 210, 211, 226n, 248n, 256, 259, 262, 266n, 268, 276, 279n, 281n, 296, 302n, 334, 335, 336, 359, 367, 380, 398–400, 445, 480, 492, 507, 515, 552, 555, 558, 562n, 577
- Myth of Zeuxis 262–63, 265, 291, 293n, 296–97
- mythography 66, 595
- mythos* 60, 86, 279n, 358, 429, 431n
- narrative 9, 14, 17, 28–30, 48, 56, 58n, 60n, 63–64, 94, 123, 137, 140, 169, 204, 208, 228–29, 233n, 247n, 259, 285, 290, 308n, 342, 346–47, 350, 369, 383, 394, 400–1, 424n, 431, 434, 437–39, 441, 472n, 494, 497, 505n, 518, 526–27, 534, 544, 552, 555, 566–67, 574–75, 576n, 583, 588, 591
- Nativity 464, 524n
- nature 3, 8, 12, 15, 21, 25–26, 28n, 31n, 33, 38n, 39–40, 44, 46–47, 48n, 49–50, 58–59, 61–64, 75, 84, 96n, 107–8, 113–15, 117, 126–28, 137, 141, 149n, 151–52, 154–58, 161, 168, 177n, 178n, 187–88, 191–92, 205–8, 210, 211n, 212–13, 214n, 230–31, 233n, 245, 247, 250, 255–56, 259, 262nn120–21, 267, 271n, 273n, 277, 281n, 282, 284, 287n, 289, 296, 297n, 298–99, 301n, 307–8, 316, 321, 329, 344, 347n, 350, 356, 359, 369, 384, 386, 388, 392, 399–401, 419n, 420, 426–27, 428n, 492, 500n, 503–4, 507,

- nature (cont.)
 509, 518, 540–41, 543, 549, 551–53,
 555–56, 565, 570n, 583, 588, 595
natura naturans 332, 509, 518, 543, 570
 naturalism 96, 145, 149–50, 262n, 323, 492,
 534, 541, 572, 583, 595
 anti-naturalism 528
 pseudo-naturalism 120, 141, 144–46, 150
 super-naturalism 151–53, 168
 naumachia 376–77, 396n, 557, 562n, 566
Navicella 219n, 562n, 563
Nebenfigur 285
 necessity 33, 34n, 70, 230, 290, 293, 334
 necropolis, see also tombs 22n, 350, 357
 Neoplatonism 1, 26, 31n, 34n, 37, 52n, 53n,
 54, 56, 63–64, 68n, 124n, 166, 183n, 211,
 214, 263n, 264, 293, 346, 347n, 418, 421n
 New Comedy 121, 365n
 niche 124n, 155, 376n, 395, 431, 448, 470, 537,
 549–50, 556, 559, 562n, 586
Nikē figures 90n, 124n, 127, 129, 203n
Nile sculpture 371n, 523
nomos-physis debate 75
non-finito 454
numerus 190, 192
 nymph (*ninfa*) 37, 63, 88, 94, 104, 127n, 143,
 158n, 205–6, 208–9, 211n, 213, 257–58,
 285, 328n, 343, 345, 356–57, 365, 372n,
 380–81, 395, 508–9, 510, 540n, 543,
 544n, 554, 583n, 597n
 nympha loci as fountain type 380–83
 nymphaeum 198, 376, 380, 395, 396n, 397,
 398n, 400, 553n, 556–57, 562

ochēma 124n
 ontology 12, 13, 17, 21, 50, 185, 232, 265n, 312,
 316n, 427
 optical correction 74, 75, 100, 318, 321n, 323
ornati (ornament drawings or engravings),
 see also ornament print 484–85
ornatus, see also *kataskeuē* 2, 22, 46, 50, 61n,
 63n, 64n, 85, 97n, 99, 101, 104n, 113, 118,
 130n, 130n, 134, 174, 175n, 188, 200, 215,
 233n, 251, 276–77, 279, 288, 290, 292n,
 305, 315, 452, 453, 470, 484, 487
ornatus mundi, see also *exornatio mundi* 41,
 45–47, 59, 108, 138, 151, 153, 174, 188, 200,
 209, 213, 216, 245, 256, 261, 272, 283n,
 296, 329, 338, 350, 365, 384, 423, 428,
 484, 509

otium 112, 113, 117, 138, 193–94, 255, 259, 260,
 380, 383

 pageant 122, 128, 129, 131, 131n48, 181, 258,
 325n, 350, 364, 373, 378, 431, 440, 441
paideia 25n, 32, 67n, 75n35, 106n, 180, 181n,
 220, 221n, 225n
 painting, as genre 6n, 23n, 37n, 39n, 61n, 74,
 84, 103n, 105, 107, 137, 143, 146, 157, 158n,
 163, 199, 237n, 262, 266, 282, 283n, 299n,
 300, 303, 304n, 305–6, 307–9, 310–12,
 314n, 318n, 321, 323, 324n, 325, 331, 337,
 412, 433n, 458n, 464, 475, 477, 478, 480,
 484, 487n, 492, 497, 501, 503–5, 509,
 521n, 530n, 531n, 533, 534, 535, 541, 544,
 563, 567, 570, 571, 579, 581–83, 588–89,
 591, 595
 as analogy for rhetoric or literature 90,
 94, 98, 100, 102, 176, 240, 289, 290, 301,
 305–6, 322n
 scene painting, see also scenoraphy 75n,
 149n, 322n, 329n, 497
Palilia 373, 374
 palinode 77, 78, 569n
 palmette 7nn22–23, 145, 145nn84–85
 panoplies 444n, 518
 panegyric 44n, 87, 125n, 131n, 155, 159, 175,
 176, 176n, 178, 179, 180, 181, 381n
 papal *possesso* 372, 470n
paragone 266n, 297n, 308, 321, 456n, 458n,
 494n
parergon 6–7, 188n, 597
 Parma Codex 583n
 pastiche 598
 pastoral 85, 137, 224, 342, 343, 394, 395, 556n
 pathos 76, 77, 78, 342, 362n41, 364n47, 459,
 512
 pattern 11n, 12, 21–24, 27–30, 34, 38–39, 51n,
 52, 62n, 69, 105, 107, 119, 144, 150, 163,
 165, 208n, 228, 268, 339, 442, 444,
 445nn8–9, 447n, 461n, 480, 483, 495,
 518, 526, 534
 peopled scroll 146, 148, 149, 510, 515, 524
 performance 15, 103, 108, 112, 117, 119, 129,
 130n, 168, 261, 267, 270, 272n, 275, 279,
 329–30, 332, 334, 359, 374, 505, 593
 Pergameme relief ornament 146n, 151n,
 152n
 pergola 144, 312, 395, 458, 492, 531n, 588
 perigesis 354, 357, 368, 379

- perspectiva* (optics) 281, 309–10, 312–20
 perspective, see also legitimate construction
 8, 13, 74, 145, 182, 194, 198–99, 278, 280,
 281, 309–10, 312–34, 392–93, 395n, 398,
 404, 439, 484, 498, 535, 540, 588–89,
 593, 597
 perspectival room 14, 367
 persuasion 67n, 70, 75–78, 106, 117, 225n,
 258, 597, 598
 Petrarchism 173, 469n
phalerae 60–61
phantasia 4n, 67, 72–73, 92–93, 103, 164,
 166–168, 322, 501n, 505
 phantasm 4n, 208, 222n, 505, 510
philanthropia 180, 181, 225n
philia 76, 111, 268
 philology 17, 216n, 218, 220, 222, 228, 234n,
 332n
 phytomorph 502, 512, 518, 545, 567
 pictogram 416, 422, 518, 573
 pilaster 146, 148n, 515n, 518n, 541n, 543–45
Planudean Anthology, see also Greek
 Anthology 407–9
 Platonic Academy (Athens) 31
 Platonic form or idea, see also idea in
 Platonic tradition 96, 98, 166–67,
 264, 291n, 296, 595
 Platonic thought, see also Neoplatonism 10,
 13, 15, 24, 29, 34n, 38n, 45n, 46, 50, 66,
 81, 111, 124n, 130, 165, 167, 173, 211–12,
 214–15, 229–30, 233, 248, 263–65, 291,
 294, 296, 300, 313, 315–16, 320, 334–35,
 346, 348, 410n, 422, 554, 589n, 595
 Platonic tradition, see also Chartres School,
 Neoplatonism 28, 30, 37, 42, 48, 50, 64,
 123, 164, 215, 314, 317
 pleasure 1, 3n, 7n, 14, 27, 36, 42, 76, 83, 88, 90,
 99, 101, 106–7, 111n, 112, 120, 134, 210, 218,
 227, 229–30, 237n, 252, 302n, 306, 342n,
 344n, 357–58, 368, 383
 plot, see also *mythos* 240, 290
 poetic theology 53n, 222, 226, 431n
 poetics 2, 17n, 65n166, 65n168, 66n, 97n,
 99n, 100n, 119, 200, 200n, 202n, 216,
 220n, 221, 223n, 225–27, 228n, 230–31,
 231n, 241–42, 248–49, 258, 279nn190,
 192, 281, 289–91, 292n, 294, 302–3, 307,
 322n, 336, 341n, 346n, 409, 423, 426,
 430n, 469n
 poetry, see also allegory, eclogue, epigram,
 fable, laureation, tragedy 6, 23n, 26, 30,
 49n, 56n, 58, 61–62, 64–66, 70n, 71n, 74,
 76n, 77n, 86n, 87–88, 89n, 95, 103, 105, 108,
 119, 131, 138, 143n, 148, 173, 200–2, 203n,
 206, 207n, 208, 210n, 216–17, 220–22, 223n,
 224–28, 230, 233n, 240, 249–50, 251n, 255n,
 257, 276, 280, 289, 292, 294, 296, 301–3, 305,
 306n, 308, 333n, 334, 336n, 343, 360, 373,
 380, 381n, 393, 406, 421, 423n, 427n, 430,
 440, 453n, 460n, 503, 528, 552n, 555, 569,
 571, 595n
 epic poetry, see under epic
 lyric poetry 134, 228, 360, 422, 429n
 mythic poetry 53–54
 'theological' poetry and poetic theology,
 see also 54, 63, 65, 214, 222, 226, 257,
 344
 poetic universality 66, 225, 279n, 290, 291n
poikilia, see also *varietas* 56n, 70n, 104,
 107–8, 158, 221–22, 230–31, 291, 356
poligrafo 249, 576
 poms, *pompa* 122n, 188, 194n, 202, 367n, 440
 porphyry 125n, 218, 439n, 462, 465, 521
 portico 194n, 346n, 398n, 531n, 537n, 548,
 559, 562–63
 posture 39, 79, 97, 108–9, 125n, 231, 260n,
 287–88, 338, 346n, 352, 365n
 potentiality 29, 35–36, 79, 81, 84, 150, 193,
 212, 235, 304n, 341
 practical intelligence 80, 283–84
 praise, *laus* 215, 31–32, 40, 42, 67–68, 70–71,
 87, 98, 101–2, 105, 118–19, 122–23, 130,
 132, 136, 142, 173, 175, 176n, 179, 184, 186,
 193, 200–1, 206, 208, 225, 228, 250, 261,
 270, 277, 301n, 303, 339, 356, 363, 392,
 394n, 400, 409, 416, 417n, 421, 431, 434,
 437, 447, 448, 575, 593, 596, 599
praxis 80–81, 84, 112, 182, 184, 188, 193–94,
 259
 preciousness 97n, 105, 165, 254, 343, 473
 predication 73, 224, 271n, 427, 430n, 571
prepon 48, 80, 82, 91, 189
primum in genere 90–97, 303n
 print 252n, 331, 364, 388n, 447, 480, 482–84,
 486, 493, 494, 508, 512, 515, 521
 ornament print 16, 324n, 413–14, 442n,
 480–81, 484
pronuntiatio, see also *actio*, *gestio* 117, 239

- prophecy 65n, 128, 233, 379n, 401, 464, 528
proportio 1, 191, 273
 proportion 1, 2n, 4, 7, 11, 15, 28–29, 39, 42,
 80–82, 113, 121, 165, 168, 181, 187–88,
 190n, 191nn79, 83, 265–66, 268, 270n,
 272, 274, 287–89, 306n, 315n, 323n, 331n,
 411, 420, 424, 428–29, 497n, 547,
 565–66, 575n
 providence 37n, 40, 48n, 50n, 58n, 66, 111,
 130, 163, 218, 259, 565–66
 prudence 40, 80, 177, 181–83, 242n, 264,
 427n, 524n
 psychology 3, 4, 5n, 281, 308n, 313n, 317,
 500–2, 593
pulchritudo adhaerens (dependent beauty) 6
pulchritudo vaga (free beauty) 6–7, 486,
 592, 597
putto, erotes, spiritello 54, 55n, 88, 104, 139,
 146, 222n, 338, 352n, 510–11
quadri riportati 540
 quality, qualities, see also accidental qualities
 under accident, substantial qualities
 under substance 1, 2, 3, 5, 8n, 11, 12, 13, 17,
 25, 27, 35n, 36, 39, 42n, 46, 49, 50n, 52, 55,
 67, 70, 73, 76, 79, 81, 82, 83, 91–93, 94, 96,
 102–3, 107, 109, 113, 114n, 119, 121, 123, 135–36,
 145, 148, 165, 175, 178–79, 184, 190–91, 192,
 193, 207, 215, 219n, 225, 230, 231, 235, 243,
 247, 254, 260n, 265, 267, 270, 271, 272, 281,
 285–86, 287, 288, 289, 290, 294–95, 299,
 302, 303n, 308n, 309, 315, 317, 323, 337, 338,
 340, 354, 356, 390, 392, 401, 410, 425n, 442,
 454, 459, 469, 476, 482, 500, 502, 510, 528,
 534–35, 550n, 551, 570, 572, 575, 578, 582,
 591, 592, 594, 596, 597
 qualitative change 79
 qualitative harmony 47, 271n, 289, 290
 qualitative opposition (opposing or contrary
 qualities) 11, 24n, 26, 27, 35, 73n, 294, 427
 qualitative proportion 15, 80, 188, 267, 287–89
 Ramism 240
 rational design 49, 118, 591
 rebus 87n, 249, 354–55, 373, 416, 421
 reciprocity 180–81, 255, 266n, 303, 401, 570
 regalia 154, 155, 252, 279, 356, 359n, 464n
 regeneration 31, 47n, 126–27, 152, 211n, 386
 relation, as philosophical and aesthetic term,
 1–3, 4, 7–8, 13n, 15, 16, 22, 28–30, 36,
 38n, 46, 48n, 49, 51–52, 84, 164, 168n,
 183n, 187, 189–91, 193, 198, 200, 207,
 235–36, 238–39, 242, 248n, 269–70, 272,
 287n, 291n, 317, 341, 364, 424, 425n, 426,
 428, 495, 592, 596–98
 relativism 48, 80, 181, 260n, 411
 relief, *rilievo*, as quality, see also under
 acanthus, Ara Pacis, maenad, Tomb of the
 Haterii 74, 91, 93, 99, 102, 105, 107, 108,
 145, 225n, 256, 266, 310, 311n, 324, 339, 340,
 365n, 397, 431–32, 445, 454, 455, 458, 464n,
 465, 470, 472, 475, 476n, 477n, 482, 484,
 509, 512, 514n, 515n66, 515n67, 518, 521, 524,
 525, 530, 531, 534, 535, 543, 544n, 556, 558,
 559, 565, 586, 594
 Graeco-roman relief 142
 Hellenistic relief 138–39, 285, 540n
 'Icarus' relief 139–41, 544n
 Neo-Attic relief 145n, 209
renovatio 203, 342, 378, 388, 460, 464, 566
res (in rhetoric and dialectic) 116, 177, 232,
 234, 245
 resemblance 126, 200n, 253, 276, 293, 304n,
 373n, 401, 421, 429, 504–5, 518, 569–70
 rhetoric, see also epideictic rhetoric, sophistic
 rhetoric 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 22, 27, 29n,
 32, 40, 43, 44, 55, 67–119, 122, 124–25, 128,
 135, 150, 155, 157–58, 159n, 166, 167n, 168,
 173, 180, 182, 183–84, 185, 189, 191n, 192–94,
 199, 200, 208, 210, 212, 219, 221, 232, 234,
 235n, 236, 239, 240n, 244, 245n, 247, 252,
 253n, 254, 266, 270, 273, 279, 280, 281, 296,
 304–6, 309, 316, 336n, 345, 356, 363, 374n,
 404, 405, 411, 436, 438, 464, 487–88, 494,
 595, 596–97
 rhythm 4, 9, 10n, 11, 22–23, 25–26, 29, 32, 34,
 44, 49, 53, 70, 91–92, 96, 105, 109n, 111,
 152, 192, 213, 257n, 331n, 333–34, 336,
 418, 569, 591, 597
 ritual 7, 8, 16, 25n, 53, 54, 59n, 127n, 133, 138,
 140n, 142n, 143n, 174, 195n, 198, 199,
 257n, 343, 348n, 350, 354, 514, 598
 robe, see also costume, dress, garment, veil
 59, 61n, 63, 104, 129, 131, 132n, 155n, 210,
 212n, 229n, 230, 431
Roman de la Rose 204n, 255, 348n

- Roman painting 94–95, 137, 142–43, 497
 Second Style 149n, 497
 Third Style 497
 Fourth Style 143n
- romance 228–29, 249, 254n, 255, 258–59,
 342, 344, 346n, 357n, 391
- ruins 350, 367, 368, 384, 386, 388, 390n,
 391n, 392, 433, 446n, 454n, 455n, 484,
 485n, 526n
- sarcophagus 123n, 124n, 140n, 445, 523n, 543
- satire 184n, 219, 252, 342
- satyr 121n, 127n, 140, 146, 328n, 348n, 350n,
 392, 396n, 524n79, 524n80, 531n,
 544n26, 544n27, 556, 559, 581
- satyr scene 328, 391, 394,
- scale 39, 90, 104n, 245, 338n, 339, 392, 406,
 427, 440, 475, 515, 516, 543n, 545n, 551,
 582, 583, 588–89, 594
- scenography see under theatre
- scepticism 67, 72–73, 75, 336n, 577
- schemata 82, 97, 572
- Scholasticism, scholastic 1, 34n, 64, 65n,
 234–35, 239, 282, 290, 424–25
- scriptural exegesis, scriptural typology, see
 also scriptural and Christian allegory and
 anagogic sense 57, 58, 61, 66n, 162n, 214,
 215n
- sculpture, see also relief 23n, 36, 98, 138, 146,
 151n, 298n, 303, 352, 359n, 369n, 372,
 378n, 383, 384, 385, 393n, 398, 406, 440,
 442, 444, 452n, 454n, 458n, 465, 469,
 476n, 503, 504, 508, 512, 514, 518, 523,
 537, 541n, 542n, 549, 558n, 566n
- sellisternium* 563n
- sensus communis* 4, 5n, 167, 317–18, 500–1,
 501n
- sententia* 91n, 94, 96n106, 96n110, 97n, 118n,
 175n, 223n, 234n, 238n, 241, 249–50,
 405n, 409, 410, 412, 414, 417, 418n, 421n,
 423n, 425n
- sermo ornatus* 200
- Severan ornament 149, 515n
- sibyl 337–38, 364n, 378n, 386, 400–1, 524n
- silva*, see also under Poliziano and Statius
 45, 212, 220, 222–28, 575–77
- similitude 66, 176, 239, 243, 311, 425n, 429,
 511, 553, 570
- sgraffito* 494n, 523n
- sketchbook 350n, 385, 391, 393n, 442–46,
 470n, 515, 541
- skiagraphia* 74, 75n, 100
- sophistic rhetoric, see also epideictic
 rhetoric 72, 75, 82, 87, 88, 104–6, 108, 118,
 128, 210, 266
- soul, see also world soul 30n, 32, 36n, 37, 42,
 44, 46, 50–51, 56, 58n, 59, 63, 64, 68, 71,
 76–78, 80–82, 87n, 111–12, 115, 116n, 118,
 123–24, 153n, 155n, 156, 164, 167, 175,
 177–78, 181, 186–87, 189n, 191, 195, 203,
 208, 210n, 211, 229n, 247n, 250, 263–64,
 266, 268, 271n153, 271n154, 272, 273n,
 275, 282, 283n, 285, 288–89, 293, 298n,
 302, 304n, 309, 318, 356n, 417, 422,
 424–26, 428–29, 430n, 501–2, 530
- species, *species* 7, 10, 12, 15, 21, 32, 35n, 37, 37,
 40, 41, 43–47, 49, 59, 60, 62, 80, 98n, 107,
 119, 135n, 138, 174, 212, 213, 222, 227, 231,
 235, 236n, 241, 250, 260n, 265, 267–68,
 272n, 283, 284, 289, 290, 294–98, 301,
 302n, 307, 309, 311, 316, 370n, 380n, 384,
 390, 421n, 422, 423n, 428, 429, 459, 492,
 505n, 509, 511, 517, 541, 545, 553, 570,
 574, 582n, 597
- specious 14, 574, 597
- spirit, see also *spiritello* under *putto* 4n, 5n,
 32n, 69n, 90n, 148n, 160, 163, 203, 204,
 205n, 241, 247n, 283n, 285, 308, 383, 420,
 425n, 441, 505, 510–11, 530
- splendour, *splendor* 2, 32, 51–52, 91, 99n, 101,
 123, 126n, 155, 159, 176–78, 188, 191, 194n,
 205, 207–8, 235n, 269–71, 272n, 273n,
 294n, 295n, 316, 317n, 405n, 412, 418n,
 478, 525, 537, 559, 574
- spolia*, *spoglie* 13, 132n, 134, 218, 371, 375, 378,
 438, 441, 445, 447, 453, 455n, 458–60,
 465–68, 469–70, 472–73, 475, 514, 518,
 526, 552, 559
- sprezzatura* 260n, 261, 267n, 269, 274, 275,
 288n, 305
- stained glass 316, 495n, 535n
- stars 25n, 28n, 29n, 30n, 31, 42n, 43, 44n, 45,
 47, 51, 100, 105, 107, 124n, 127, 153n, 155n,
 159, 160n, 161, 175, 176, 197, 209, 216, 227,
 228, 229, 237, 261, 262n, 272, 293, 303,
 305, 333n, 336, 367n, 423
- statues, see also sculpture

- Stoicism, Stoic 10, 24, 29n, 37–41, 43, 44n, 48, 56, 96, 111, 115, 118, 130, 135n, 138, 167, 173, 218, 283n, 294, 321n, 322, 323n, 453, 595
- strapwork 339–40, 414, 531n
- stucco 339–40, 397n, 470, 473, 480, 482, 531, 534, 535n, 540n, 541n, 543–45, 549, 551, 557–59
- studia humanitatis* 221
- style, see also *disegno* and manner 6, 12, 13, 14, 143n, 149n, 279, 285, 287n, 307, 322, 337, 339n, 340, 356n, 390n, 405, 414, 442, 447, 459, 462, 464, 472–73, 475, 476–77, 479, 483, 485, 487–88, 492–93, 494–95, 497, 498n, 500, 507n, 512, 529n, 531, 534, 535, 550n, 563, 582, 586, 591, 594, 596–97
- in rhetoric and literature, see also epideictic rhetoric and sophistic rhetoric 61, 63, 70, 71–72, 73, 82–83, 85, 88–94, 96n, 97–99, 101–2, 103n, 104–7, 111n, 117, 119, 134, 154, 166, 179, 200, 204n, 208, 219–20, 221n, 224–25, 229n, 231, 233, 237n, 238–42, 251–59, 264n, 265, 280, 281, 299n, 305, 342–43, 345, 347, 354, 356, 406n, 407, 414,
- subjectivism 48, 72, 75, 80, 181, 238, 239
- substance 24, 35–36, 43n, 79, 81, 83, 107, 235, 236n, 252, 270, 288, 303, 304n, 309n, 316, 340, 570, 572
- secondary substance 265, 291, 296
- substantial form 47, 49, 424
- substantial transformation 87
- substitution 517, 544, 570, 579
- super-naturalism, super-natural 124, 127, 151–55, 168, 256n, 332
- syllogism, see also *enthymeme* 82n, 117, 220n, 235n, 239, 258, 316n, 421n, 430n
- symbolic representation (in Proclus) 52–55, 165, 420, 572
- symbolic theology (in tradition of pseudo-Dionysius) 52, 57, 161
- symmetria* 27–28, 92, 166n
- symmetry 7, 10, 22, 23, 28, 105, 114, 152n, 178, 472n, 473n, 569, 591
- symmetrical doubling 545, 569
- sympathy 39n, 53–55
- syntax 76n, 254, 571
- Syrian language 572
- talent 98, 256n, 262n, 299, 302, 485, 492n, 530
- tapestry 107, 143n, 339, 482, 498n, 586, 594, 597n
- taste 5n, 6, 7n, 81, 92, 98, 115n, 120, 190, 192, 406n, 475, 500n
- taxis* 24–26, 42n, 76, 111
- technē* 76, 80, 90, 111–12
- temperament 254, 299, 309, 427, 428n, 528n
- temperance 76, 111, 114–15, 215, 269, 274, 524n
- temporality 15, 17, 31, 44, 48, 126, 200, 212, 342, 344, 358, 364, 367, 386, 401, 437, 453, 459, 537, 555, 566
- tempus edax rerum* 342, 388, 390, 526n
- tendrils, see also garland, ivy 7n, 23, 143, 145–46, 149–50, 529n, 533, 569, 579
- Tetrarchs 125
- textiles 59n, 154, 160, 224, 225, 308, 370n, 412n, 442n, 443n
- theatre, see also *frons scaenae* 9, 15, 41, 100, 120, 144, 168, 169, 192, 194, 196–99, 201, 278–80, 284, 290, 321, 337, 342, 357, 359, 360, 365, 370n, 372–76, 378, 379, 393, 394, 395n, 397n, 398, 400–4, 434, 438–39, 448, 468, 548–49, 566n, 581, 589, 591, 593
- Greek theatre 121, 127, 128, 129, 137, 143, 278n, 322, 334n, 376n, 593
- Humanist view of theatre 194–98, 275–79, 373–74, 379, 384, 391,
- memory theatre, see also Camillo, Giulio 242, 244–48, 249n, 415, 422, 484, 572
- scenography 13, 15, 68, 75, 121, 129, 199, 278, 321, 322–32, 333–34, 393, 394, 438, 574
- sedes argumentorum* see under topics
- theatre as metaphor or topos 35, 42, 43, 51n, 130, 195, 246–48, 275–79, 300, 337, 368, 391–93, 429
- Theodosian Code 174, 449, 451–53, 469
- theōria* 50, 80, 166, 182n, 195, 196, 247, 277–78, 370n
- thesaurus 216, 234, 236, 246, 410, 543, 571
- theurgy 53–54, 419
- thiasos*, see also Dionysus 139, 360, 544
- titulus* 159, 161n, 411n, 437n, 461
- toga picta* 365
- Tomb of the Haterii 124n, 148n
- tomb, see also epitaph, necropolis 86, 87n, 142, 153n, 201, 285, 317n, 343, 345n,

- 346n, 348n, 350, 357, 362n, 368, 406–7,
 448, 453n, 465, 467, 487, 512, 514, 518
 topics (*loci argumentorum, loci communes, sedes argumentorum*) 13, 384, 393, 414, 416, 422, 423, 439, 440, 484, 586
 in Aristotle 81, 135, 241, 249n
 in Greek and Roman rhetoric 82, 122, 126, 241,
 in Cicero 135n, 236n, 241
 in Humanist dialectic, rhetoric and poetics 236–37, 241, 242–50, 302, 422
 topical articulation 134, 137–38, 174, 207, 255, 379, 383, 393, 394, 395, 399
 topography 130, 135, 180, 182, 198, 199n, 226n, 237n, 311n, 324, 325, 343–44, 350, 357, 358, 369, 373, 375–76, 379, 383, 386, 388, 392, 394–95, 399, 401, 433n, 438, 448, 470, 484, 549, 551–52, 555, 565–66
 topos, topoi 36, 56n, 77n, 84, 86–87, 88, 93, 97, 101, 135–36, 138, 140, 151n, 155, 157, 161, 162n, 163n, 180, 200, 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 220, 227, 228, 231, 236, 249n, 252, 254–59, 262, 282, 305, 321n, 342, 344, 368n, 380, 381, 384, 392–93, 399, 409, 422, 437, 503n
 bee topos 88, 146, 200n, 224, 228n, 229, 252–53, 262n, 265, 460n
 garland or flower meadow as topos 88, 104n, 156–57, 216,
 theatre as topos, see above
 torsion 109, 121, 287, 337, 534, 569
 tragedy 69, 83n, 168, 201, 224n, 290, 294n, 322, 333n
 tragic scene 324n, 327, 329n, 331, 393
 Trajan's Column 472
 Transfiguration of Christ 524n
 translation 1, 4, 25n, 42n, 57, 76n, 85, 87, 89, 136n, 175–76, 206n, 347n, 411, 418, 460–61
 transcendental property 52n, 234
 Trinity 59n, 364n, 371n
 triumph, see also *adventus*, Biondo's *Roma triumphans*, Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*, Petrarch's *Triumphs*, poetic laureation, trophy, triumphal chariot (see under chariot) 13, 15, 33n, 122–23, 124n, 126, 129, 197, 204–5, 216, 344, 358–60, 364–65, 367, 369, 373, 379, 381, 394–95, 427n, 431n, 441
 Alexander in triumph 126, 127
 as Dionysian festival 126, 127–28, 129, 142n, 359–60
 as Renaissance festival 217, 311n, 334n, 359–60, 371n, 372–74, 376, 378, 379, 438–440
 in Christian iconography 153, 359n, 372n, 428, 452, 477
 in Humanist poetry and poetics 66, 200–3, 204n, 216–17, 453, 574
 in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* 344, 350, 352, 354, 358, 360, 518
 in *intermedi* 329n, 332, 333n
 in Petrarch's *Africa* 203
 in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 206–8, 209n, 360
 in Renaissance decoration 197–98, 217, 362–65, 367, 371–73, 376, 395, 430–31, 433–34, 437–38, 458, 472, 475, 477, 512, 514, 515n, 524n, 526, 530, 531n, 578, 585–87
 Renaissance reconstructions of Roman triumph 358–62, 368–72, 448, 458
 Roman triumph 97n, 98, 122, 125–26, 128, 130–33, 134, 154n, 201, 203n, 204n, 358–59, 362n, 364n, 365, 368–71, 375
 triumphal arch
 as frame 198, 362–63, 393,
 as support for ornament 198, 256, 362–63, 431, 472, 514n, 524, 551
 in Early Christian architecture 153–54
 in poetry and poetics 201, 256, 258
 in Renaissance architecture 193, 198, 372, 376, 393, 395, 397n, 398, 470, 518
 in Roman architecture 151n, 153–54, 368–69, 519, 521n
 in theatre design 327
trompe d'œil 537
 tropes 70, 97n, 99n, 104n, 239n, 241, 409, 417n
 trophy 14, 122, 132–34, 153n, 209n, 332, 445, 515, 518, 526, 531, 545, 578
 Tuscan (vernacular) 201, 217, 224, 248n, 267n, 345, 370, 586n
Tychē 130, 131, 373
 typology 56, 57, 113, 146, 186, 201n, 214, 215n, 388, 401, 424, 483, 555, 562–63
typos 151n, 57, 163

- universal concept 263
- urban spectacle 195–96, 198, 360
- urban topography 135, 358, 431, 438
- urbanism 121, 470
- Urbino panel (“Ideal City”) 323–24
- ut pictura poesis* 302n, 432, 492, 567
- utility 49, 384

- vaga, vaghezza* 6n, 273, 294n, 304n, 306, 398n
- varietas*, see also *poikilia* 13, 56n, 107, 155n, 186n, 188, 200, 212, 215, 221, 224–32, 260, 265, 288, 296, 342, 344, 356, 359, 370, 408, 476–77, 551
- vegetal ornament, see also *acanthus*, *tendril*, *vine* 9n, 23n, 145n, 146n, 149, 151, 385, 462, 526
- veil, see also *integumentum*, *phalerae* 56, 59–60, 61n, 62, 63, 65n, 66, 109n, 148n, 206, 207, 212, 223n, 257, 259n, 348, 418, 422n, 426, 537, 572, 574
- Venus Felix* 378–79, 383
- verbal–visual allusions, see also *word–image pairings* 9, 13, 86, 94, 120, 344, 405–6, 417
- verisimilitude 338, 456, 492, 497n, 502, 531, 541
- vernacular, *volgare* 204n, 224, 227, 260–61, 267n, 342, 345, 346n, 453, 469n

- vetustas* 388n, 459, 468
- villa, see *individual villas by location* 105n154, 105n156, 135–36, 138, 149n, 180, 182, 194n, 219, 248n, 255, 359, 364n, 374–76, 378–80, 383–84, 393–98, 400–2, 406, 437n, 438n, 472–73, 551–52
- vine 7n, 9n, 124n, 128, 139, 143, 148, 157, 425n, 529n, 533, 541, 579
- virtue 3, 62, 68, 76, 111, 118, 121n, 123, 130, 137, 151, 165, 175, 177–78, 194, 208, 230, 256n, 266, 268, 272, 283n, 314n, 337, 348, 354n, 364, 426n, 431, 439n, 507–8, 524,
 - in ethics 28n, 29, 56n, 59n, 71, 75, 76, 80–81, 83, 92, 112–13, 115, 179, 187–89,
 - in rhetoric, poetics and discussions of style 82, 90, 91, 93, 102, 112, 114, 119, 173, 176, 178–83, 186, 206, 209, 252, 259, 261, 265–66, 268–70, 272, 274, 285, 295, 303, 412, 452, 453, 458n, 518
- voluntarism 65
- volute 7n, 145n, 518, 545, 569

- word–image pairings 12, 344, 358, 383, 407, 425, 514
- world soul, *anima mundi* 29, 45–47, 111, 271n

- xystus* 136, 194, 549–50, 552